VICTORIA

LATE

AUSTRALIA FELIX,

OR

PORT PHILLIP DISTRICT OF NEW SOUTH WALES;

BEING

AN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT

OF

THE COLONY AND ITS GOLD MINES.

WITH

An Appendix,

CONTAINING

THE REPORTS OF THE MELBOURNE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS UPON THE CONDITION AND PROGRESS OF THE COLONY.

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PREFACE.

THE leisure hours of the long homeward voyage from Australia have furnished me, at two different times, with the opportunity of drawing up some account of one of the rising colonies of this remote territory of the British crown.

The first publication, in 1848, gave the history of a young but promising settlement, forming at that time the southern division of the colony of New South Wales, under the official title of the Port Phillip District—an inconvenient designation, however, for which the colonists themselves were prone to substitute that of Australia Felix, a distinctive appellation bestowed upon a large part of their country during the early explorations of the colonial surveyor-general, Sir Thomas Mitchell, on account of the surpassing beauty of its scenery.

On this second occasion my subject has undergone a change alike wonderful and complete. The Port Phillip District is now a distinct colony, rejoicing in the royal name of Victoria, a colony of a large British population, abounding in all the elements of wealth and progress, furnishing to Britain the envied possession of a second California, perhaps even more productive than the first, and already assuming the position, amidst formidable Indian and American rivals, of the first of British colonies.

The interval I have alluded to, during which so striking a change has been accomplished, is scarcely yet six years. How interesting therefore to reflect what a few more years of the future may accomplish, in a progress which the latest accounts from Victoria represent as still unabated!

And no less important than interesting is this prospect. The reader will therefore excuse a particular prominence that I have given in several of the following chapters to some political considerations that are probably destined to a conspicuous position in this pregnant future.

Where there is much to tell, and little either of time or space at disposal, one is apt to do injustice

to a subject. Accordingly, I find, when too late, that I have overlooked a manuscript of the adventures of the early colonists of Port Phillip, given me by Mr Fawkner—a subject interesting generally, as well as locally, from the striking contrasts which the brief space of less than eighteen years has produced since the first colonizing party rowed their solitary boat upon the waters of the Yarra, and fastened their anchor-chain to one of the gum-trees of the forest then covering the site of Melbourne. I have also inadvertently represented Collins as arriving with his convict party at Port Phillip in 1804, whereas this event took place in October 1803, his residence there having extended over three months.

There remains but one more subject, and not the least important. I find that in no part of my allusions to the subject of the Australian gold-fields, have I gone into the question of their permanence. This may have arisen from the habit already acquired in Australia of taking that point for granted. A few words here, however, will not be out of place on the subject.

The observations alike of practical and scientific men tend daily to confirm every previous rumour

as to the extent of the auriferous soil, and this not only in Victoria, but throughout New South Wales. Recent observations would also prove that the auriferous indications extend into South Australia, Van Diemen's Land, and even New Zealand, in all which countries gold has actually been found in places which science or the mere practical eye had pointed out. In some of these countries mechanical appliances are perhaps more necessary to success than they have been hitherto found with the gravelly quartz beds of Victoria, where simple washing is still so largely productive; or there is as yet in the neighbouring colonies a want of that overpowering popular faith which brings together ten thousand active hands, whose incessant digging, anywhere and everywhere, however much at random, soon reaches any available treasure that the earth may happen to contain within the usual range and capabilities of the pick and shovel, the cradle and the washing-dish.

The question therefore as to permanence of the gold-fields is one rather of the modes of producing than of the existence of the gold in immense collective quantities in the earth. That the present rude method is one not likely to grow in public favour

I feel quite convinced. This vocation is too irregular in its results, and too laborious and unhealthy for continuous pursuit; and it is well known that the great mass of diggers ever consists of the more newly arrived colonists, who, from love of adventure, insatiate curiosity, or the want of other employment, proceed in many instances straight from the ship to the gold-fields. These parties, under a variety of impulses, are sustained for a time at their laborious calling. But gradually they realize the adversities of their position. The average results are scarcely if at all beyond good current wages; and when the want of comforts at the gold-fields, and the high prices of the necessaries of life, are duly considered, this reward proves rapidly unsatisfactory. Large proportions of those who so eagerly rushed to these scenes, are, after a month or two, or possibly six months, found as eagerly marching back, on the outlook for some other employment.

Notwithstanding all these uncertainties, however, the numbers at the various diggings have on the whole been increasing; and with reference to present modes of gold-seeking, this increase may still continue, or it may not. But undoubtedly some

higher order of mechanical appliances must erelong come into use at the gold-fields, and thus at once place this great question of the future supply beyond that domain of accidents, within which it seems now so entirely to rest.

Still more important in this question of the gold produce appears to be the carrying out of the railway projects at present before the colonial public of Victoria. The different gold-fields of Ballarat, Mount Alexander, Bendigo, and the river Ovens, are situated at distances from Melbourne varying between 80 and 150 miles. If we allow for the difficulties and expenses of present interior communication, these distances, small as they may appear in Europe, will rival not unfairly, on an average of concurrent bearings, those of Alexandria or the West Indies to the people of this country. What then must be the difference as regards the attraction of the mines and the production of gold, when at comparatively nominal cost, and within a scarcely appreciable space of time, passengers and necessaries, the comforts and even the elegancies of life, are poured with a tumultuous plenty into these gold-fields, and when life, which at present in such scenes is barely tolerable, may possibly be rendered

quite as healthful and agreeable as elsewhere in the colony?

While referring to the Australian gold-fields, one is reminded, by some recent official publications on the subject, of the claims of science regarding these grand discoveries. I have had occasion to allude in sufficiently explicit terms to the immediate discoverer, Mr Hargreaves. Prior to this discovery, the observations of Count Strzelecki, and of the Rev. Mr Clarke of New South Wales, with the deductions of Sir R. I. Murchison, had demonstrated the existence of gold in Australia. Mr Hargreaves' merit consisted in demonstrating not merely the existence of gold, but of an available gold-field. But when we ascertain the repeated prior intimations of science on this subject—when we perceive that Sir R. Murchison, so far back as the year 1844, directed the attention of government to the probable Australian gold-fields, that he repeated this intimation subsequently, and that, amidst the general impulse given to the subject by the Californian discoveries in 1848, he attempted once more to arouse the incredulous authorities—we are gratified in the reflection, that even gold-digging, that proverbial game of a mere rude empiricism, is still beholden to

science for its triumphs, and that its not having been so in the momentous case now before us is due neither to the error nor yet the indifference of science, but simply to a disregard of her clearest intimations.

WILLIAM WESTGARTH.

EDINBURGH, 25*th October* 1853.

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COLONY OF VICTORIA.

CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY.

Name and Origin of Victoria—Boundaries—Recentness of Discovery—Early History—Colonized from Van Diemen's Land—View of that Colony—Batman and Fawkner's Expeditions to Port Phillip.

VICTORIA dates her existence as a separate and independent colony from the 1st of July 1851. The colony had previously formed the southern division of New South Wales, and was familiarly known by the name of the Port Phillip District, or, more shortly, Port Phillip, in compliment to the noble harbour of that name, which forms so conspicuous a feature in the geography of the country. The name of Australia Felix, given by Major (now Sir Thomas) Mitchell to some of the finer parts of this territory during his early explorations, had also come into common use as a name for the whole district, and, from the obvious and flattering dis-

tinction it conferred, was evidently destined to acquire the supremacy with the colonists. On the occasion, however, of conceding the separation of this settlement from New South Wales, the Home Government intimated that Her Majesty had been pleased to award her own name to this new and flourishing portion of her empire,—a change to which there was of course no demur.

This separation from New South Wales had been long and strenuously demanded by the Port Phillip colonists. They had found that the relations of revenue and expenditure were not very scrupulously adjusted in a remote treasury, where the pressure of local wants was apt to be most responded to. They were quite willing, therefore, along with the accompanying benefits, to meet all the necessary expenditure entailed by a local and independent government.

The boundaries of the new colony continued to be identical with those of the previous Port Phillip District. To the south was Bass Strait; to the west the 141st meridian east from Greenwich, traced from the sea to the river Murray; to the north the course of the Murray upwards to the Australian Alps, and thence in a line south-east to Cape Howe, the eastern entrance to Bass Strait.

These boundaries do not very accurately agree with the natural demarcations indicated by inter-

course and commerce on the side of New South Wales. The northern bank of the Murray for some distance inland, and the pastoral outposts for two hundred miles up the Darling, hold their communications with the seaports of Victoria; and the same may be said of a small portion of pastoral country situated within the South Australian boundary to the westward of the 141st meridian, whose live stock has been chiefly contributed from Victoria, and whose commercial dealings are still with that colony The disadvantage of a *de jure* relationship to one colony and a *de facto* to another, may be more apparent when, in the progress of the country, votes of money for improvements and other expenses are required for these disputed territories.

It will be scarcely credible to one who observes now the full tide of busy life exhibited in Victoria, to be told that nearly the whole of the coasts and harbours of this country were unknown, even to geographical science, only fifty years ago. That the noble harbour of Port Phillip, for example, on whose shores there are now two wealthy cities, having a population between them of 100,000 souls, was first entered by civilized man only within the present century. Lieutenant Murray, in the Lady Nelson, made this discovery early in 1802, followed shortly afterwards, and within the same year, by the distinguished Australian explorer, Flinders.

Four years previously Mr Bass had reached Western Port, in an adventurous excursion in an open whale boat from Sydney, and demonstrated, for the first time, that there existed a strait, and not continuous land, between the mainland of Australia and Van Diemen's Land.

The next remarkable incident is the arrival of Collins, in the year 1804, with a party of convicts at Port Phillip,—for so this fine harbour had been called, in honour of Governor Phillip of New South Wales. The Home Government, attracted by the favourable accounts of the port, had resolved on colonizing this locality by a mode in great favour at that time—namely, by the formation of a penal settlement. After a trial of a few months, however, the attempt was abandoned as regarded Port Phillip, and the convict party was transferred to the south-eastern part of Van Diemen's Land, where an expedition from Sydney, under Lieutenant colonel Patterson, had just previously founded, upon the western bank of a picturesque and navigable river, the present considerable city of Hobarton. Fresh water had been the chief want experienced at Port Phillip. In this respect, as in most others, the site was erroneously selected. The spot on which the settlement was made is still pointed out by the present pastoral occupants of that part of the country, and is situated about midway between

the hill called Arthur Seat, where it projects into the waters of the bay, and the headland of Point Nepean, at the entrance of the harbour.

An extraordinary circumstance occurred in connexion with this early convict settlement. Several of the convicts had effected their escape into the Bush during Collins' stay, and amongst them one of the name of Buckley,—a soldier who had been transported for assaulting his superior officer. Buckley was the sole survivor of these runaways. After wandering about for some time in great misery and destitution, he at length ventured to take up with the natives, and being a man of great strength and stature, he no doubt commanded some respect. He contrived on fitting occasions to secure his own share of wives and other current spoil, and for the surprising period of upwards of thirty years he conformed to aboriginal habits and customs.

A curious interview took place between this man and the Van Diemen's Land colonists, who, as we shall presently learn, came over to Port Phillip after this long interval. The reported arrival of white men had brought Buckley down to see them. He was found sitting naked under a tree, near Point Gellibrand at the mouth of the Yarra, and gazing, though without much curiosity, at the colonists. These in their turn were somewhat perplexed what to make of this nondescript, who was

evidently not one of the aborigines. On addressing some words to him he seemed to have a difficulty in understanding what was said, and repeated the sentences, or parts of them, several times slowly over. By degrees, however, the recollection of his language returned, and he proved useful as an interpreter with the aborigines. He was afterwards employed as a constable in Melbourne and Hobarton, and in his old age still resides in the latter town, where the authorities give him a small pension. £40 a-year, a considerable addition to his finances, has been recently awarded to him by the Victoria government.*

For an interval of twenty years, Port Phillip attracts no further attention. During this interval, however, the colonists of New South Wales had extended themselves to considerable distances into the interior around the fine harbour of Port Jackson, where their colony had been founded as a penal settlement in 1789. Their flocks and herds had now multiplied considerably, and, alarmed by the repeated experience of severe drought, they sought with some anxiety a greater scope of pasturage.

* The most of these particulars of Buckley were given to me by some of the earlier colonists. An account of Buckley's life was lately published at Hobarton, and had I not unfortunately mislaid a copy which I brought with me to this country, I might have added some interesting particulars to the above, or have found occasion to correct my brief account.

From the vicinity of Lake George, already occupied by the New South Wales colonists, in a south-westerly direction, lay a vast and unexplored territory, and report had already whispered that it contained fine rivers and extensive pasturage. Messrs Hovell and Hume, two colonists who were situated on these southern outskirts of the colony, resolved upon an exploring expedition into this unknown territory.

A journey that is now methodically accomplished by a semi-weekly mail may be regarded as a matter of vulgar facility. But the case was widely different in the year 1824, when it was performed for the first time. Without roads, without settlements or human habitation, our travellers, after a long and toilsome journey, at length emerged from the wilderness upon an inland seacoast that appears to have been that of Port Phillip, in the vicinity of Geelong. Their return was equally difficult and laborious; but they reached home in safety, to apprize the colonists of the valuable resources that awaited them in the south. Several considerable rivers had been encountered by the travellers, to one of which they gave the name of the Ovens, since distinguished for the auriferous character of its banks; another, which received the name of the Hume, is now more generally known as the Murray, the largest of the Australian rivers. The only

immediate results of this expedition appear to have emanated from the New South Wales government, who despatched from Sydney, several years afterwards, a small military party with a detachment of convicts, to form on this accustomed principle a settlement at Western Port, in the hope that this proceeding might prove the nucleus of a second colony on the Australian main. The experiment, however, appears not to have answered, and was soon afterwards abandoned.

We come now to the colonizing enterprises that were destined to be more permanent and successful. These failures of Collins at Port Phillip, and of the last mentioned effort at Western Port, appear to have terminated all interest for southern expeditions in the minds of the colonists of New South Wales, and the accounts brought by Hovell and Hume seem to have been at length forgotten. The successful founders of the Port Phillip settlement arrived from the opposite direction—namely, from the southern shores of Bass Strait—a locality already alluded to as having been only a short while previously made known to geographical science, but now transformed into a busy scene of colonizing industry. This colonization of the Port Phillip territory on the part of the people of Van Diemen's Land, commenced in the year 1835.

This island, termed also Tasmania, in honour of

its discoverer Tasman, had been established, as we have already seen, as a British penal colony by Collins, in 1804, who settled in that year at Hobarton, the capital of the country, with the party of convicts transferred from Port Phillip. A second seaport, which, from home associations, received the name of Launceston, was some years afterwards formed upon the northern coast, situated about forty miles from the sea, at the head of the navigation of a fine river, which from similar associations derived the name of the Tamar.

During an interval of thirty years, Tasmania had made considerable advances as a colony. The Transportation system of the Home Government, at this time in the plenitude of its operation in this island and in New South Wales, had certain embarrassments attached to its progress that were perhaps not foreseen, or at least not duly considered, in the first institution of these penal settlements. By far the most momentous of these troubles was the prospect, now beginning to be realized, of a society composed almost entirely of criminal elements.

The convicts, as they passed through the various gradations towards freedom, became engaged in trade or business of some kind, and acquired an attachment to the soil that generally retained them in their place of banishment after the restoration of liberty. The composition, too, of this ominous so-

ciety was in the proportion of about four-fifths of males and but one fifth of females,—all these consisting of an adult population, and the females being, in many instances, by their previous career, unfitted physically as well as mentally for the relations of wife and mother.

For the impending evils associated with this state of things, the different governors of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land recommended to the Home Government the same description of cure. This consisted in inducing a number of free emigrants to settle in each colony, by the temptation, to the educated classes, of a grant of land, and to the mechanic of a free passage, and abundant employment in his new home. There was the twofold object of improving society, and providing for the disposal of the accumulated convicts, already embarrassing to the government. These parties therefore were now freely transferred to the grantees of the lands in the capacity of labourers, under certain favourable conditions. By these means, Van Diemen's Land already exhibited the pleasing spectacle of numerous agricultural estates, occupied by respectable families, throughout the country, where improvements were largely carried on, and where everything bore the aspect of plenty and peace. The basis of society was corrupt and degraded; but the reign of prosperity, the convenience and

subserviency of the convict labourers, a lavish convict expenditure on the part of the Home Government, and the effect of habit upon the mind of the free colonist, arrayed the physical in formidable counterpart to the moral scenery, strengthened still more by a general smile over the face of nature, in the magnificence of Tasmania's scenery and the delightful salubrity of her climate.

The staple commodities of Van Diemen's Land, as of New South Wales, were her flocks and herds. The climate and the natural vegetation of the country were alike suited to the production of live-stock,—a business that afforded a means of existence, and even of the accumulation of wealth, to many of the colonists. As Van Diemen's Land advanced in pastoral riches, the fears that had already affected the stockholders of the northern colony, as to a scarcity of pasturage, began to disturb the Tasmanians. The sheep of the colony were computed to have increased to 800,000,—a very large number in these earlier times for any part of Australia. The country was naturally less open than that of New South Wales. The dense forest or the thick underwood restricted the growth of grass, and fears were general and serious that the country must soon be overstocked, unless some outlet could be found for the surplus flocks and herds of the thriving colonists.

Reports had for some time been in circulation that a fine open grassy country lay in the *Terra incognita* to the north of the straits. Whaling parties were familiar with its coasts and harbours, and had repeatedly entered Port Phillip, of which they spoke with favour; and the crews of vessels that were driven by stress of weather towards the northern shores contributed their confirmatory intelligence In 1834, the Messrs Henty of Launceston had visited Portland Bay, situated nearly two hundred miles to the westward of Port Phillip. where, finding abundance of pastoral country in the interior adjacent, they were induced to send over a number of sheep towards the end of that year, and have since formed extensive pastoral settlements in that fine part of the territory.

This proceeding was in reality the commencement of the colonization of Victoria: it may also be called the commencement of South Australia, a colony that had been just defined during the same year by the British government, and into whose territory some of these flocks were now sent, for the purpose of occupying the fine pastures situated around Mount Gambier. But the operations at Port Phillip in the following year, and the reputation and success that attended them, have rather obscured the antecedent claims of the remote and isolated efforts at Portland.

Two parties have acquired celebrity in connexion with the early colonization of Port Phillip—the late Mr John Batman, and Mr John Pascoe Fawkner. In May 1835, Batman took a preliminary trip to Port Phillip, to ascertain the truth of the reports about the country. Having satisfied himself on this head, he communicated with several influential capitalists in Van Diemen's Land, with whom he promptly formed a company for the immediate colonization of the new country.

The views of this company were somewhat ambitious. Batman had met, and after some fashion or other, conversed with several of the aborigines, and the idea was suggested of bargaining with these primitive lords of the Australian soil for a goodly slice of their territory, and of having the sale conveyed and registered in due form of law. Accordingly, a certain amount of knives, tomahawks, blankets, flour, and so forth, were displayed before the eyes of the delighted natives, who with great goodwill agreed to exchange for these rare luxuries as much land as their new friends chose to bargain for. Perhaps these latter took credit to themselves under such tempting circumstances for being satisfied with only two blocks of land containing altogether about 600,000 acres of the best they saw around them. Batman then settled himself with his family upon these promising domains, occu-

pying for the present the high land of Indented Head, a promontory situated on the west side of the harbour, about fifteen miles from the entrance, and commanding an extensive view. Under the humorous title of "King John," awarded to him after this "smart transaction" with the natives, as a Transatlantic brother might term it, he surveyed his extensive dominions, and kept an uneasy watch upon the entrance to the harbour, where he ever expected a swarm of enemies from the busy hive at Launceston.

In the meantime, Fawkner, who had been forming a party about the same time as Batman, and with similar objects, had been delayed in his expedition for want of a suitable vessel; but having at length supplied himself in this particular, he arrived in Port Phillip in August, and, passing King John and his camp with little ceremony, sailed on to Hobson's Bay. The party came to anchor off the site of Williamstown, where they landed some live stock, and then proceeded in their boat to examine the river Yarra. About nine miles by river-course from the anchorage, they were attracted by a spot that appeared to offer an eligible site for their proposed settlement. The river expanded into a natural basin, just below a slight fall or rush of the water, occasioned by a ledge of rocks. To the south lay a partially wooded flat, across which, in a direct

line of less than two miles in length, was the northern shore of the bay they had just left; while the opposite bank of the river consisted of gentle grassy hills covered with an open gum-tree forest; the whole comprising, as usual during the winter season of the year, a verdant and rather beautiful landscape.

Here the party were induced to form their settlement, and their judgment in regard to this selection was afterwards confirmed by its being made the site of Melbourne, the capital city of the colony, where the busy colonists have since rapidly altered the gentle aspect of nature as first witnessed by Mr Fawkner and his friends. The emu, which has already become rare throughout the entire colony, then frequented the open forest that spread before them, while the kangaroo, skipping about in undisturbed happiness, would emerge in troops upon the flat from the denser woods on the southern banks of the Yarra. The branches of the old gum trees were filled with black and white cockatoos, and innumerable paroquets, whose gaudy plumage sparkled in the bright sunshine, while their incessant chattering imparted life to a scene otherwise hushed in the rare presence of man, and the total absence hitherto of his noisy but enlivening commerce.

This party commenced vigorously the work of

colonization A portion of the number proceeded to some distance up the country with live stock, being warned from off the immediate vicinity by those in connexion with Batman, who stood firmly to their territorial rights, and claimed the best of the country between the Lower Yarra, Geelong, and Indented Head The remainder of Fawkner's people, however, in open defiance of these assumptions, pitched their tents upon a rising bank immediately above the natural basin alluded to, and since transformed into the market square of Melbourne, where they soon gave indications of life and business The plough and the spade were brought forth, and the music of the blacksmith's forge resounded through the primeval forest

Meanwhile, Mr Batman finding his first location rather remote for the defence of his interests, transferred his camp to the seat of war, where he erected for himself and family a wooden mansion, situated on the southern face of a green hillock that has since borne his name. This pretty verdant bank still exhibits, at the south-western extremity of the city, its primeval sod, and some shattered remnants of the *she-oak* timber with which it was originally covered The different members of Batman's party had already partitioned amongst them their late extensive purchase, and from time to time were introducing live stock from Van Diemen's Land to

occupy the ample pastures. These were landed first at Hobson's Bay; but the still finer lands around Geelong soon divided attention, and induced the Launceston traders to proceed also to Point Henry, the southern head of the inner Geelong harbour.

A war of recrimination was now in full play between the two rival parties. But as other colonists began to stream in from Van Diemen's Land, bringing with them merchandise and live stock, Batman's claims became more than ever disregarded. As the lands in question rose in consideration, his party became naturally the more anxious to secure their stake. The government of New South Wales, which had successfully proved its claim to the jurisdiction of the new settlement, had refused to recognise the bargain with the aborigines. Nothing daunted, however, the company, which consisted of wealthy and influential Tasmanians, drew up a case for the Home Government, which they intrusted to an able counsel in London. This advocacy was to have been backed by some favourable report promised by Colonel Arthur, then governor of Van Diemen's Land, who had also put forward a claim, like his official brother at Sydney, to the jurisdiction of the new settlement.

As might have been expected, the Home Government refused to confirm this pretended purchase made from parties totally incompetent to such

transactions, and consisting of lands that acquired their value from the presence of a civilized authority, and of all those inpouring colonists from whom it was attempted with such a wholesale sweep to carry off the public lands. The company, however, was awarded a consideration in land equal to £7000, as a return for the expenses they had incurred in first colonizing the country. The claims put forward by Fawkner's party received no attention—a circumstance that occasioned another bone of contention. But for the present we shall leave these angry disputants, and take a view of the country in which they had located themselves.

CHAPTER II.

CLIMATE—SCENERY—ABORIGINES.

Vicissitudes of Temperature—Hot Winds and their Cause—Effects of Climate on the Population—Mortality caused by present Circumstances—General Resemblance in Australian Scenery—Contrast of the Summer and Winter's Aspect—Mountains, Rivers, and Waterfalls—The "Water-holes" and their Utility—Extent of available Lands—Characteristic Rocks—The Stony-rises and extinct Volcanoes—The Aborigines—Their gradual Disappearance—Manners and Customs—Abortive Attempts to civilize them.

VICTORIA, as comprising that part of Australia the farthest removed from the equator, enjoys the coolest climate attainable within that vast territory. Its southern headlands of Cape Otway and Wilson's Promontory penetrate into Bass Strait to the latitude of 39° south, while the bounding line of the river Murray to the north touches the 34th parallel. Between these degrees, the average temperature in the southern hemisphere, which is somewhat lower than the same latitudes would give in the north, seems well suited to the English constitution, and, as far as experience has yet shown, is not hostile to the development of high physical and mental exertion.

But while the climate of Victoria is on the average the coolest, it is also perhaps the most changeable of that of all these colonies. Exposed on the south to the cold breezes from the sea, and on the north to the hot winds from the interior, the changes of temperature are alike sudden and extreme. The north wind of summer, strong, steady, dry, and hot in its character, is a frequent visiter; and being generally succeeded by an equally strong southerly breeze, fresh off the ocean, the thermometer falls within a few hours, occasionally within a few minutes, through a range of from 20° to 30°.

The temperature during the hot wind ranges usually between 80° and 100°, depending for its degree of intensity upon the period of the summer in which it occurs, and the state of the country as to moisture. If the country have been previously well moistened with rain, this wind is not disagreeable; but if it continue for two or three days, as this northerly breeze is apt to do under such circumstances, it becomes gradually more dry and hot as the surface moisture disappears under its desiccating influence. Having now acquired the characters and effects of a hot wind, there is called into operation those meteorologic influences that appear unfailingly to ensure a refreshing change. The cool southerly breeze is ushered in, and with it in general, although not always, a return of rain.

The hot wind is felt most oppressively when it occurs after long periods of dry weather. Thus it is often very severe in February, the summer's sun having still its full power, and the country having had usually by that time a long period of dry weather. With the autumnal rains this wind loses its hot and dry character, and in winter the breezes from the north are not marked by any peculiarity.

These winds, with the violent changes by which they are terminated, are of less frequent occurrence in the adjacent colonies, but occasionally in these warmer latitudes they are exceedingly severe. At Sydney, and in the interior of New South Wales, the thermometer in the shade has been as high as 120°, and even 129° is recorded by Sturt, on the occasion of his exploring the river Macquarrie in 1827. The severest of these visitations on record, in Victoria, occurred on Thursday, the 6th February 1851,—a day ever since remembered under the designation of Black Thursday. The thermometer ranged between 100° and 110° in the verandas and other shaded parts of the dwelling-houses throughout the colony. The country, exceedingly dry from a long cessation of rain, took fire in many directions,—the flames overrunning the grass, spreading among the trees with frightful avidity, and occasioning the loss of much property. Similar weather was ex-

perienced at the same time in the colonies of South Australia and New South Wales.

The cause of these hot winds, and the source whence they are derived, is a subject of some interest. The idea of a great inland Australian sea, that long haunted the minds of Australian colonists, did not promise any elucidation of the subject. The arduous expedition of Captain Sturt in 1845, from Adelaide into the northern interior, at length threw light on the mystery. Instead of an ocean of water, that adventurous explorer found a boundless horizon of the most sterile desert—a veritable Sahara of the south—a waste of sand and stones, without a blade of grass or a visible drop of water. At the imminent hazard of his life, the traveller penetrated 270 miles into this desert, attaining the latitude of 24½° south, but without any indications of an alteration in the physical aspect. The hot wind comes over Adelaide from the north, it reaches Melbourne from about north-north-west, and Sydney from a direction still more westerly. The locality of the desert is thus pointed to in common from all these different localities. A remarkable confirmation of the intimate connexion of this desert with these hot winds was furnished by the traveller Leichardt, during his overland journey, in 1844, from Moreton Bay to Port Essington. As his party advanced northwards, the hot wind changed its direction

from northerly to westerly, until, in about latitude 20° south, when blowing for the last time, for it was never experienced further north, it had begun to come from the southward, blowing in the direction of west-south-west.

From these circumstances, it is not improbable that a large tract of comparatively good and well watered country exists immediately to the north of Sturt's Desert, being a continuation of the available lands that were so abundantly met with by Leichardt along the northern coasts. The desert terminates, perhaps, at least as regards its utterly sterile character, at no great distance beyond the point attained by Sturt. Leichardt appears to have acted on this view, in shaping his course, in 1847, from Moreton Bay to Western Australia—a project almost unparalleled in boldness, although warranted in some degree by the unexpected success of his previous expedition to the north, but a journey in which there is now only too good reason to believe that this distinguished traveller and all who accompanied him have long since perished.

There is, then, in the centre of Australia an extensive arid waste, situated on the margin of the tropics, whose meteorologic relations, under a burning sun and a deprivation of the moderating influences of water and vegetation, give occasion to our ever-recurring hot winds. Whether or not the pro-

gress of improvement will succeed in modifying these winds is a subject of some interest. The agency of numerous reservoirs of water appears the most promising. Australia is singularly destitute of these natural varieties, alike useful and ornamental, to her inland scenery. But notwithstanding the fitful character of the showers, there is no lack of rain on the average of years throughout the whole country, and in Victoria the supply, year by year, is generally copious. The temporary torrents raised by the winter's rain, succeeded by the desiccative qualities of summer, have conjointly operated to scoop out immense ravines along the courses of the rivers, and furnished at many points facilities for arresting by artificial means large and permanent reservoirs. The desert itself was noticed by Sturt to be traversed by river-courses, one of which, in particular, was on an extensive scale, although at the time of his visit all were destitute of water. The colonists are impressed with the importance of additional supplies of water to increase the varied capabilities of the country; and their united efforts may operate, although by slow degrees, to moderate the harshness of the pristine climate.

Like the visions of poisonous snakes, of huge centipedes and tarantulæ, and ferocious blood-red ants above an inch in length, all of which ungainly tribes really exist abundantly in Australia, although none

of them seems to give any concern to the residents, so the anticipations of hot winds to those at a distance are far more terrible than the realities of experience. It has been remarked, that the peculiar dryness of the climate, and particularly on occasions of hot winds, imparts to it a less oppressive character in comparison with the actual temperature. I have met with many colonists, who, during a succession of Victoria summers, have not experienced any sense of oppressive warmth,—a few cases only excepted, including, for example, the notable one of Black Thursday. Daily labour is never arrested by the oppression even of the noonday sun. The sensation of cold is indeed a much more frequent complaint, and is in general a subject of astonishment with the arriving emigrants, whose preconceptions regarding the proverbial bright sun, hot winds, and droughts of Australia, are uniformly associated with ideas of tropical temperature.

Defective house accommodation, and a short supply of houses such as they are, still expose the colonists to extremes of climate that are of a remediable character. The alternations of heat and cold are severely felt in the wooden dwellings, of which a large proportion are still constructed in the colony. The clear nights, even in the midst of summer, are generally quite cool, sometimes cold, leaving the vegetation profusely covered with the

morning dew. On this account, a substantial stone or brick building, from which, by a little care with the doors and windows, the draft of the hot wind is excluded, can easily be maintained at a moderate and equable temperature. In such buildings, the thermometer, during summer, in apartments not exposed to the sun's rays, is seldom beyond a maximum of 76°.

The average temperature for four or five months of summer may be estimated at rather less than 70° during the day, and at about 8° less during the night. There is occasional frost with thin ice during mid-winter nights in the month of July. The average temperature of winter, from the latter half of May to the end of August, may be estimated at 55° during the day, and at the same diminution of about 8° during night. Rain falls plentifully during July, August, and September, imparting a chilness to the atmosphere. Fires are maintained in the sitting-rooms during fully six months of the year, and the morning and evening fire is prolonged considerably further. The colonists, however, are apt to betake themselves to the fireside upon rather slight provocation. Doubtless the heats of summer render them somewhat sensitive to cold. Perhaps also the cheerful blaze from the timber, and the simplicity of the hearth arrangements, entailing but little trouble in the business of fire-making, act favourably in calling

forth, upon the slightest pretence, this enlivening addition to the domestic circle.

The hot winds of summer, and the sudden alternations of heat and cold which they occasion, are the drawbacks to the climate of Victoria, disagreeably enhanced also by the clouds of dust that are raised on these occasions in the towns and along the principal thoroughfares. The effect of the considerable rains of winter upon the unformed or unfinished roads render colonial life, as far as regards locomotion, unpleasant for a portion of the year. But this must ever be expected in new colonies; and in Victoria the defect is compensated by its dryness and excellent travelling condition during the remaining and major portion of the year. In other respects, I may expatiate largely on the pleasures of the Australian climate. The bright vivifying sun, and the azure cloudless sky, the soft balmy atmosphere, the crystal dewdrops of the morning, and above all the clear and serene night, lighted up by the glorious constellations of the south, and enlivened by the notes of the Australian cuckoo, and the busy hum of the insect world—these are all familiar to the British colonist in a measure far beyond his old experiences in the murkier climes of his native land.

Of the effect of such a climate on general health and longevity, there is as yet perhaps scarcely time and experience to form an adequate opinion. Ob-

servation on this head is now, and must long continue modified by several important circumstances. Acclimatising, for instance, if a temporary accessary to mortality in Australia, is continually in operation upon large masses of society, in a colony increasing so rapidly as Victoria by immigration from without. The habits of Englishmen are maintained in spite of a climate that naturally suggests some decided differences in regimen. The use of the most substantial food—of beef and mutton, for instance—and of stimulating drinks, continues, as in the colder latitudes of Britain, and with this difference too, that in the case of the great mass of the labouring community, whose ample earnings enable them to procure every luxury of this kind that their appetite demands, the consumption is in much the greater proportion in the colony. The savour of butcher's meat, the boiled, the roast, and the grilled—the three stereotyped forms of John Bull's cookery—emanates at all hours, even during the hottest summer, from the highest mansions and the most unpretending cottages.

The indulgence in spirituous and fermented liquors is very free among all classes, who are in general less restrained than in the mother country by considerations of household economy, or less careful of their courses in the comparative rarity of domestic ties. A colony so conveniently remote

is apt, too, to become the receptacle for many of the class of "ne'er-do-wells" at home, whose grieved or affronted friends measure the degree of their relief by the thousands of miles that separate from them, for better for worse, the subject of their anxieties. Such separations are generally for ever as regards this world; and these importations into colonial society are mostly, after a brief career, transferred to the lists of mortality.

To these different circumstances must be added the unhealthy condition of the towns, from the want of drainage and supplies of water. In this respect the condition of Melbourne, according to some recent inquiries on the part of the authorities, is truly startling. In the vacant spaces of back areas and waste grounds, within the lines of streets, were to be seen collected together the putrescent carcasses of dead animals, articles of damaged merchandise, remnants of cast-off apparel, and accumulations of filth and ordure, diversified with stagnant and putrid water, and ranges of open and dilapidated closets. Such confusion is inseparable for the time from an almost incredible rapidity of change and progress; but, in recording the facts of the case as they now stand, I am happy in being able to add, that the remedy has been commenced, by the recent appointment of a commission armed with ample means and powers for the sewerage and water-supply of the capital.

The effects of gold-mining vocations are now also another unfavourable circumstance to be considered in the estimate of the climate. In this respect, indeed, and in the crowding and unsettling of the colonial population, the gold discoveries have operated with deleterious effect, and appear to have caused a great increase to the ratio of mortality.

I am not aware that the medical staff of Victoria have as yet arrived at any decisive or unanimous views upon this grave question of climatic salubrity. A general impression seems to prevail that there is no favour to longevity, unless in cases where the prime of life has been attained in a cooler latitude prior to arrival. Some wasting effects are doubtless, as compared with Britain, especially attributable to the climate, and no less perhaps to the ardent pursuit of mercantile and other vocations. At present the mortality is striking; but more particularly of residents in Melbourne. Infant mortality appears there to be beyond the usual average, and many deaths are observable at periods of middle life unusual elsewhere.

Illness, death, or convalescence, all appear a more summary process in Australia than in Britain. There are not usually those protracted gradations that almost imperceptibly extinguish or restore the European patient. There appears ever a vivid sense or enjoyment of physical existence. To be or not to be are, in their emphatic extremes, the sanitary

text of the Australian. In a colony which receives daily from without every description of human constitution, these remarks must carry many exceptions, and longer experience is necessary to test their general truth. In the meantime, if existence is less enduring than in colder latitudes, it may deserve to be called more joyous, or at least it is susceptible by mental regulation of being made so. The torch of life is less enduring in proportion to the superior brilliancy of its flame: it blazes brightly to the last, and disappears at once.

The physical aspect and climatic features of the Australian continent bear many points of general resemblance—as far at least as this is possible with a vast territory measuring a length of 2400 miles by 1200 in breadth, and extending from 39° of south latitude to the close vicinity of the equator. The bright sun and blue sky are common features everywhere; the hot winds pervade the southern half of this immense domain; the general dryness of the climate, the remarkable coolness of the night, features alike invigorating against the high temperature of the day, more or less characterize the whole country from the Gulf of Carpentaria, as observed by Leichardt, to the sterile shores of the Great Southern Bight.

The general resemblance is still more striking in the Australian landscape. The open forest, free

from underwood, with its grassy carpet beneath and its park-like aspect, is common to all latitudes of the country. The extent to which such scenery occurs throughout Australia forms the striking and even peculiar feature of that territory; and to the pastoral facilities which this kind of country offers, ready-made as it were at the hand of Nature, is to be traced the rapid progress of the Australian colonies, and more particularly of Victoria, which pre-eminently abounds in these pastoral lands. The general flatness of the country, which is, with a few exceptions of Alpine scenery, only here and there relieved by individual cones or solitary mountain-chains, supplies but few rivers, and these in nearly all cases of an intermittent character, and imperfect for purposes of navigation in consequence of the sandbanks that beset their entrance. The winding creeks, as they meander in fitful courses to the distant ocean, are commonly indicated by their belts of trees standing out in relief upon the naked and expanded plains. The forest foliage has the non-deciduous or perennial character. The indigenous red gum (*Genus Eucalyptus*), confined exclusively to Australia, characterizes the more available of the soils of the country; and the kangaroo and opossum, a marsupial dynasty of countless ages, has occupied every Australian forest, unassociated even from remote geological eras with other types of

quadrupeds, until the irruption of civilized man and his attendant hosts into this remarkable country.*

Under a climate exposed to a summer of considerable intensity, to a dry atmosphere, and to frequent intervals of drought during the hottest season, it may be expected that the aspect of the country is somewhat various at different times of the year. The immigrant arriving in January or February, looks aghast upon this new land of his adoption, in which he sees around him nothing but the distress of vegetable life struggling for existence under a broiling sun—the grass universally withered into hay, and the drooping and dull olive foliage of the gum trees still further depressing the sombre aspect of nature. The blow of summer appears to have been irretrievably severe, and to have thoroughly burnt the grass in root and blade. But a few days of rain and moderate weather are sufficient, even in the warmest season, to restore for a

* It is a striking circumstance that all fossil remains, even of extinct mammalian animals, show the marsupial indications. During long eras of the past, therefore, Australia has probably been the same isolated and peculiar region that we now find it. The only case of real or apparent exception is that of the dingo, or native dog, found very generally over Australia. The facility of breeding with the common dog shows an identity of species. I believe that much stress would not be laid by naturalists upon the uniformity of the brown or ochre hue of the dingo. The probabilities of the case seem to be, that the common dog found access to the country, either by means of the early navigators two or three centuries ago, or possibly still earlier, through trading or incidental visits from the Indies to the north.

time the lost verdure, and with the showers of autumn it is soon permanently resumed.

The month of October, which is in Australia the middle season of spring, generally exhibits Victoria to the greatest advantage. The wet of winter has passed away, leaving the surface dry, the roads good, and the country in universal verdure. The heavy evergreen of the Australian forest will not indeed compare at this season with the bright new-born foliage of an English spring; but this disadvantage is amply compensated by a more mild and delicious temperature, and by the joyous associations of gay skies and brilliant sunshine. Vegetable life is strong and luxuriant. The geranium, the fuchsia, and the rose, successfully flourish with the indigenous productions; and the fruits of England are freely developing their forms in association with the grape, the peach, the melon, and even the orange of warmer latitudes. The abundant grass is everywhere diversified with native flowers, and the atmosphere loaded with the sweet perfume of the acacia. So passes this beauteous season, proverbially enchanting everywhere; and as the less inviting summer, the clear bracing autumn, and the chill and rainy winter, successively pass over the colonist, he learns, in the proper appreciation of variety and change, to welcome with increased enjoyment the return of ethereal spring.

The Australian Alps of Gipps' Land, in the eastern division of Victoria, furnish some of the grandest of the mountain scenery, attaining to an elevation, at the summit of Mount Kosciusko, of 6500 feet above the sea. From the various valleys and gorges of these snow-clad ranges issue the chief tributaries of the Murray, the principal river of Australia. Innumerable icy streamlets descending into the subjacent plains to the west and north, give rise to the Goulburn, the Mitta, and the Hume or Upper Murray, whose united waters traverse by winding courses an extensive area of pastoral settlements, and joining at successively lower stages with the Campaspé and the Loddon, the Murrumbidgee, the Lachlan, and the Darling, finally enter the sea in the vicinity of Adelaide. The Grampian ranges to the westward present also striking features, surpassing in lofty grandeur their prototypes of the Scottish Highlands.

The other rivers and mountains of Victoria are not particularly remarkable. The Yarra, falling into Port Phillip, takes its rise in the east-north-east, about eighty miles from its mouth, and maintains a constant run throughout the year, although generally reduced towards the end of summer to a rather tiny stream. Its navigation is partially impeded by the occurrence of two bars between Melbourne and its mouth, which prevent the larger

shipping, drawing over nine feet of water, from ascending to the capital. The river Glenelg, at the western boundary, is of an intermittent character, and its mouth inaccessible to shipping. This river and its eastern tributaries intersect a fine pastoral country connected in its commerce with the town and harbour of Portland, and the scene of the earliest pastoral settlements of the Tasmanian colonists in Victoria.

The valley of the Wannon, one of these eastern tributaries, is in particular diversified and beautiful. Midway in its course it exhibits two magnificent waterfalls, one of which, I am informed, measures 140 feet in perpendicular height. The full force of a winter's rain imparts a grandeur to these natural features that is rarely surpassed in this description of scenery. This fine river, taking its rise in the lofty ranges of the Grampians, now swollen to an impetuous torrent, and again hushed into a chain of tranquil ponds connected by the tiniest streamlet, pursues its course with endless windings, through grassy vales and woodland dells, until absorbed in the waters of the Glenelg. In this promising locality the eye as yet scarcely encounters more than the shepherd tending his peaceful flocks around the isolated homesteads of the squatters; but one may readily fancy that the day is not far remote when tens of thousands of human beings may call up in

these silent vales the echoes of ceaseless industry, and all those varieties and embellishments that follow civilisation and prosperity.

The river Hopkins, falling into the sea near Warnambool, is also remarkable for a fine waterfall, although not comparable in grandeur to the principal fall of the Wannon. I may observe, that the receptacle of the waters of this latter remarkable fall has all the indications of being, by some curious physical arrangements, the crater of one of those extinct volcanoes that are so numerous throughout the colony; and one may speculate on an extraordinary battle-field, as the mind conjures up the possible reopening of the dormant fires, and the consequence of so violent an encounter between two implacable foes of the physical world.

These different rivers, in common with all others throughout Victoria, are formidable in the deluge of waters to which they are liable after the occurrence of heavy rains. The floods of the Yarra, the Murray and its tributaries, and of many other creeks and rivers, have been the constant occasion of great loss of property and even of human life.

No description of Australian peculiarities is complete that omits the interesting feature of the "water-holes." The traveller who visits Australia in the end of summer, will be surprised to find that, with few exceptions, every river-course he meets with

is destitute of running water. Sometimes, indeed, for miles together these channels contain not a drop of water; but in general the rippling streamlet, or the rolling torrent that occupied the bed a few months before, has now been transformed into a chain of ponds or water-holes of various dimensions, frequently of great depth, that wind into the far interior with their ample reservoirs of this prime necessary of human life. The water-hole phenomena belong generally, perhaps exclusively, to those creeks or rivers whose currents have only a temporary existence. The circumstance of a dry atmosphere and the occurrence of droughts appear to be the very life of the water-hole system. The copious rain that succeeds a drought soon discharges a torrent through the empty water-courses, whose zig-zag directions, as in the case of most rivers that run through flat countries, occasion powerful eddies, that act upon channels alternately wet and dry, and now baked and cracked by long exposure to sun and drought.

Many of these water-courses, or, in the local nomenclature, "creeks,"—a name commonly applied to the smaller rivers,—are not regularly supplied each succeeding year with running streams. This is particularly the case with the lesser creeks that have no extensive drainage of country, and that are at the same time perhaps charged with a for-

midable array of water-holes, whose claims, after the evaporation of summer, have not permitted any surplus to flow over into the sea. In this manner, creeks may be frequently in motion to certain distances from their source, and yet for years, and only after unusually humid seasons, will the flow reach the mouth.

Although small in area, these water-holes are frequently twenty or thirty feet and upwards in depth. Valuable reservoirs of this kind, that may be expected to withstand the severest drought, are the mainstay of many pastoral stations, where supplies of water would be otherwise too precarious, and the country therefore for the time unavailable. The homestead is generally perched on the bank of the best water-hole that the area of the station affords. The continued wholesomeness of the water, even after two or three years of interval since it was refreshed by the running stream, is a surprising feature.

During long continued droughts that have visited Australia, the gradual drying up of the water-holes becomes a subject of alarm on the pastoral stations. It must be remembered that in such seasons the supply of food also fails, the grass ceasing to grow, and what is on the surface being soon consumed to the very roots by the live stock. Dangers from these causes have already occurred repeatedly

in Victoria. In the summer and autumn of 1844-5, for example, sheep were dying for want of food and water, and the cattle in many places were supplied with some temporary subsistence only by the cutting down of a number of the indigenous trees. The drought of 1850-51, the season of Black Thursday, was still more severe. On such occasions the sheep on the more sterile locations are driven off to the nearest mountains, where, amidst contending rivals for these favourable localities, and the alarms and complaints of the occupant already in possession, live stock may have some bare chance to maintain an existence until more propitious times.

No droughts have as yet afflicted Victoria at all comparable to several that have visited New South Wales, or the Sydney District, as the older portion of that colony was termed prior to its recent division. But with our limited experience, there is certainly no guarantee that the spectacles of 1826-8 and 1837-9, in returning to New South Wales, may not extend into Victoria, and with so much the more dreadful effect, in proportion to the increased burden of live stock, and the comparative inadequacy of any available resources under the present squatting system. A change of this primitive system, which is one almost entirely of the "*laissez faire*" order with regard to the capabilities of the country, will however gradually supervene, with

the advent of population and capital, the competition of enterprise, and the march of improvement.

The colony of Victoria is favourably distinguished as comprehending within its boundaries the greatest comparative extent of available soil of any of the other large sections of Australia. In New South Wales, a proverbial sterility reigns for many miles around the magnificent and unrivalled harbour of Port Jackson; while the remainder of the colony, from the eastern coast line to the river Darling, exhibits to the explorer only a chequered scene, in which the available lands of this extensive country are far outnumbered by those that are useless for the purposes of human industry. In South Australia, where the aspect is more promising, an extensive area of fine land, equally beautiful in scenery and productive to agricultural industry, stretches for many miles around Adelaide and along the eastern shores of the Gulf of St Vincent; but in most other directions throughout the spacious area of that colony, the country is unsuitable for either agriculture or pasturage, although, in many parts of these sterile soils, extraordinarily rich in the ores of copper and other minerals. Van Diemen's Land, also, which has a considerable extent of fertile soil, particularly over the northern and middle divisions of the island, is comparatively retarded in her onward progress by the labour

clearing the thick and heavy timber with which her best soils are encumbered. The available lands of Victoria extend from the shores of Port Phillip to the river Glenelg at the western extremity of the colony, a distance of 250 miles, with few intersections of sterile ground, comprehending tracts of the richest soil and most charming landscapes, and augmented by numerous smaller portions of rich country, in Gipps' Land, for example, and in the northern parts of the colony between Port Phillip and the river Murray, above the junction of the Campaspé and Goulburn.

The great proportion of the finer soils is of volcanic origin. The rich black or brown earth, which we come upon perhaps in crossing some creek or river that marks in its course some distinctive features of the country, is always associated with rocks of the trap or basaltic order, either in masses of the ordinary appearance, or scattered loose over the surface. These loose surface stones give quite a characteristic feature to many parts of Victoria, forming ridges and hillocks in endless diversity, and, under the local name of "stony-rises," covering many square miles of surface. These are chiefly remarkable around Mounts Napier and Eeles, and to the south and west of the salt lake of Corangamite; but they are found, although less extensively, in many other parts of the colony.

From the circumstance that extinct volcanoes are always found in the vicinity of these curious formations, a common idea is that the stones have been thrown out of the craters in times of ancient eruption.* Judging from the lines of ridges in which they show themselves, it seems more likely that they are the result of local upheaving forces. The narrowness of the ridge would suggest that the force had been exerted at no great distance from the surface, possibly at the junction of the lower part of the volcanic mass with the surface beneath it—a surface we may suppose that had been previously uppermost, and covered with animal and vegetable life. The disjointing into stones or small rocks seems to have been an operation of time and weather upon the upheaved and cracked surface. I have myself repeatedly noticed instances where the mass was only imperfectly so reduced, exhibiting in some parts the solid rock with merely cracks or fissures, instead of a mass of unconnected stones. These volcanic heaps are everywhere variegated with little patches of rich soil, luxuriantly covered with grass. The fissures and cavities are coated or filled with a rich brown mould. One can almost realize the movements of decomposition, and see the virgin soil in the act of formation.

The extinct volcanoes, which exist in extraordinary numbers throughout the extensive belt

fine land I have alluded to, form a most interesting feature. In many instances the craters are perfectly defined, leaving not the slightest doubt as to their former character and doings. In general they appear as isolated cones, such as Mounts Elephant, Eeles, Napier, and others, standing out conspicuously upon a surrounding level; in others, as the Warrion Hills, between the lakes Colac and Corangamite, they assume the form of a small chain, comprising in this instance about a dozen distinct volcanic hills. Within and around the craters are many light pumice-looking rocks and stones; and the lower part is often occupied by a small lake, sometimes of fresh water, at others of salt, or nauseous in taste and smell as from the presence of sulphuretted hydrogen. This fine country is also variegated with salt lakes and small lagoons, some of which latter, with their circular form, their peculiar mineral water, and a sort of escarpment around them, have the appearance of craters, although not in the customary form of cones.

Luxuriance of vegetation everywhere accompanies the volcanic indication; so much so, in fact, as to be in some places injurious to the health of the sheep and the quality of the fleece. The picture of the past, called up by geological science, contrasts strikingly with the present scenery. The most violent commotions of nature have been suc-

ceeded by the opposite extreme of tranquillity. Sheep fat for the shambles the whole year round, horses in the highest spirit and condition, oxen half a ton in weight, sport over the verdant grass and the deep soil now covering the once livid rocks that were vomited over the country. These soils, too, are usually safe from the troubled scenes of gold-hunting. Their pastoral adaptation has given them, from their first settlement, an immediate use and productiveness in a mere state of nature; and with the advance of the colony, this noble territory will be made to contribute still more, even with infinite increase, to the sustenance and welfare of large communities of mankind.

Before concluding this chapter upon the general description of the country, I take the opportunity of introducing a few paragraphs upon a race of our fellow-men, already few and far between in their small and scattered tribes, and not destined, to all appearance, in these days of grasping enterprise and resistless colonization, to endure much longer as one of the varieties of mankind—I mean the aboriginal Australians.

Considerable bodies of aborigines appeared to the first settlers at Port Jackson in 1789, and from time to time they quitted the little canoes with which they paddled and fished in the small coves of the harbour, and came to view the progress

the settlement. They gazed, although with little apparent interest, on the gradual clearance of the primeval forest, the rearing of civilized habitations, and that general encroachment on their territory, which in its cold, quiet, but merciless effect, was soon to drive off and exterminate their feeble and scanty race. The natives on these coasts at that time numbered hundreds in each tribe. The Botany and Port Jackson tribe had four hundred. In 1846, after a lapse of fifty-five years, the inquiries of the Legislative Council of New South Wales brought to light the state of these aborigines, and the havoc which in this comparatively brief interval had resulted from the occupation of the country by civilized man. Whole tribes had disappeared or were now represented by only a few scattered individuals, who, sunk in sloth and debased habits, had long dropped their characteristic activity and dexterity, their antipathies of tribes and mutual warfare, and their severe and peculiar ceremonies, the exercise of which was wont to maintain among them a certain barbaric discipline and virtue. Three females and an old man were all that remained at that time of the Botany and Port Jackson tribe.

At the period of this inquiry, the aboriginal population, scattered over the wide area of New South Wales, extending beyond Moreton Bay to the north, to the river Darling to the west, and the

Port Phillip boundary to the south, might be estimated at 10,000 souls; the Port Phillip District contained about 5000, and South Australia 3000. A few forlorn creatures, under official superintendence, on Barren Island, in Bass Strait, represented the whole remnant of the distinctive race that once inhabited Tasmania. In all these cases the numbers were considerably greater before the colonization of the respective countries. We may perhaps safely assume that these different places, forming the south-eastern portion of the great Australian territory, and comprehending the greatest range of attractions to human population, in regard to climate, scenery, and animal and vegetable productions, contained also in its uninvaded state the largest comparative population of aborigines. And yet this population for the four colonies could scarcely have exceeded 50,000 persons. If we set down the present aboriginal population of all Australia at a quarter of a million, we shall not, I believe, under-estimate that vast territory, with its 2½ millions of square miles, its delightful and salubrious climate, its extensive tracts of available land, and the boundless resources which are now made to appear under the agency of other and more favoured races.

The Australian aborigines, in their natural state, are generally found grouped together throughout

the country in tribes of several hundred persons each, and each occupying or rather ranging over some particular tract of country, claimed as its own from time immemorial. Whatever may have been the origin of these distinctive bodies of the population, they now maintain a very hostile and mutually exclusive aspect. This is to be understood at least of the male natives,—the females among the Australian, as in the case of other barbarous races, being held in very small consideration, and being frequently the subjects of plunder in the wars or expeditions of the different tribes. This exclusive spirit, maintained throughout successive generations, has introduced considerable differences of language. In the case of tribes occupying adjacent territories, the dialects are sometimes so different as to give the appearance of two distinct languages.

These different tribes appear scrupulously to respect each other's territory. A stranger is pursued and put to death by the tribe of the territory on which he has adventured, unless indeed he has arrived on some mission, and exhibits his credentials accordingly by the display of certain preliminary ceremonials. One of these is, that he shall give ample notice of his approach, and present himself during daylight, in order to show that he has no underhand intentions. Ignorance, or neglect of these forms, may have frequently originated the hostile

feelings of the natives towards travellers and colonists, and engendered mutual and incurable distrust.

Meetings of a number of different tribes are sometimes held together in particular places, by common agreement, apparently for purposes of ceremony or festivity. In this way the different tribes of the part of the country situated between Port Phillip and the river Murray, to the number of about seven hundred souls, male and female, met together in the vicinity of Melbourne, in the winter of the year 1844. The various tribes, with a display of innumerable fires, placed as usual in front of their exposed wigwams, encamped upon the grass of the open forest. The corrobboree, or native dance, commenced shortly before sunset, and was vigorously maintained for some time by the successive dancing parties of each tribe, some old man of the party giving the time in a monotonous native melody, and the females beating in consonance with their palms upon their opossum rugs. This meeting terminated peaceably, the natives all dispersing after a day or two. But these occasions are not always so quietly ended. The passions are often roused from some cause or other, and these ceremonies finally resolved into a fight. One fertile cause of such sanguinary terminations is the attempt on the part of some of the younger men of the tribes to possess themselves of

the females of some of the other tribes, as their supply at home is commonly very stinted, in consequence of the large appropriations of their seniors.

In their natural state, these aborigines stand out with a species of rude dignity. The acuteness and precision of their observant faculties are not to be surpassed, and they exhibit a surprising tact in their various modes of discovering and securing food. The narrow compass of their minds is concentrated in a few lines of vocation, in which, as in the exhibitions of a Blind Asylum, there are displayed an extraordinary accuracy and skill. But to these barbaric excellencies must be added the most degrading superstitions and revolting customs. Civilized nations are still unwilling to believe that infanticide and cannibalism are associated with the customs of any race of human beings, or voluntarily practised, except in those rare cases of necessity which have broken down the barriers of nature alike to the white and the black. But nothing is better affirmed than that cannibalism is a constant habit with this degraded race, who alternately revel in the kidney fat of their slain or captured enemies, and in the entire bodies of their own friends and relatives. Nor can the infant claim any security from the mother who bore it, against some ruthless law or practice or superstition, that on frequent occasions consigns the female proportion, and some-

times both sexes, to destruction. On authentic testimony, bodies have been greedily devoured even in a state of obvious and loathsome disease; and a mother has been observed deliberately destroying her youngest child, serving it up as food, and gathering around her the remainder of the family to enjoy the unnatural banquet.

The causes that affect the decrease of the aborigines are in some particulars sufficiently obvious. The colonizing of the territory occupied by a tribe leaves to this particular section no other place of retreat. From observation of their habits, it may be surmised, indeed, that the Australian aborigines would not willingly mix with the whites, if their ceremonies and their natural mode of life could be preserved to them elsewhere. An aboriginal is not tempted by the comforts of refined life. When he meets in the forest the deserted hut of a colonist, his tastes or his superstitions still incline him to prefer his open wretched wigwam, even under all weathers. After having been persuaded to endure for a season the clothing and refinements of the colonist's life, he seems to have acquired once more a lost existence when he has effected his escape to the primeval bush, cast off his cumbrous garments, and resumed with his opossum rug all the barbaric simplicity of the habits of his race.

But the temptation of food and the gradual ac-

quirement of vicious habits of indulgence, permitted to them by the sportive mood or the negligence of the colonists, soon bring them familiarly among the whites. The effect is most destructive. They fail in activity and energy; they appear to learn everything that is bad and nothing that is good. Bad examples seem readily comprehended, and as readily imitated; but the opposite course is a riddle which they either cannot understand at all, or in which they can perceive no motive or adequate inducement. Their use of tobacco and ardent spirits, their irregular supplies of food, too often acquired without that wholesome exercise of body and mind which was wont to accompany these supplies, soon tend, in their exposed and careless mode of life, to enervate their bodies and destroy their health. In addition to these causes, whole tribes are gradually smitten with disease, loathsome and incurable in many cases, and tending sensibly in all to restrict the further increase of this unfortunate and doomed race.

These are the more obvious causes that are at present in operation in extinguishing this aboriginal race. Other causes less visible are perhaps not less powerful. The effect of the presence of the white man in overpowering numbers, influence, or authority, is to crush the native spirit and independence, such as it is. All the paraphernalia of habits and

ceremonies are gradually put an end to. They are rudely interrupted by the application of our laws, or otherwise disturbed by our disapproval, indifference, or ridicule. Absurd, useless, or mischievous as these superstitions and barbarities may appear to us, they are everything to these aborigines, and, deprived of their time-honoured practices and vocations, they live without object or motive beyond that of the mere brute creation. The occupation of their country is a subject over which they brood more earnestly than might be supposed by one who is a mere casual observer of their external deportment. They witness the colonists year by year take firmer and more extensive possession; for them and their children the future has no hope. "We have no country for our children now, and want no more children," said one of the seniors of the Western Port tribe, whose present scanty numbers forebode that ere a few more years have elapsed, the remnant of the old and the young will have alike disappeared.

Since the formation of the British colonies in Australia, the aborigines have not been altogether abandoned to the untoward accidents here alluded to. Repeated efforts to convert and civilize them have been made, although doubtless unsuccessful. At considerable public expense, the government for a long time persevered with the insti-

tution of an "Aboriginal Protectorate." For many years, Christian missionaries also have laboured among the natives. Sometimes for a season this has been with hope, but always ultimately without success. At one time it was thought that by isolating a particular tribe, and by carefully excluding the members of hostile tribes, and every other occasion of rousing the fiercer passions, a spirit favourable to religion and good order had been attained; at another, the complete separation of the young children from their old and hardened parents and their tribes seemed the effectual means of reclamation. But all these attempts have failed, and, with very few exceptions, they have all at length been abandoned.* The natives appeared unable to comprehend civilisation, which to them consisted in a routine of irksome labours; and a critical examination of their religious views and attainments was ever a ludicrous and deplorable exposure. Why, then, continue that vegetative existence upon the isolation principle, which, even if partially successful in one point of view, was yet wholly the reverse in every other, as it took from these poor creatures

* The only mission to these aborigines that I am aware of as being now in operation, is that of the Moravians in Victoria, under the charge of two German pastors, who arrived in Melbourne about three years ago, and immediately proceeded into the northern interior. They have adventured with good heart upon the forlorn hope, and we must wish them God-speed.

every hope and joy, every object and motive of exertion and of life, and gave them nothing they either understood or cared for in return? Why tear children from their clamorous parents, training them in spite of both parties into habits which they are ready on the first opportunity to abandon?*

These are obvious arguments, and they have led to the natives being in a great measure left to themselves. We are compelled to the conclusion that this is the best course wherever they have the means of following their own mode of life. In thickly colonized districts, where this can no longer be the case, it is desirable that the hand of religious zeal should minister to the scattered remnants that still linger among the resistless invaders of their soil, and that that hand should at least smooth the path that is so directly leading them to extinction.

CHAPTER III.

GENERAL PROGRESS.

Progress of the Port Phillip Settlement—The Sydney Government assumes Charge—Selection of Townships—Remarks on Colonial Seaports—Disadvantages of Melbourne, and unfavourable Comparison with Geelong—Plan and Appearance of Melbourne—Description of the Harbour of Port Phillip—First Sales of Land—Town Allotments—Speculation—Extraordinary Advance in Prices—Inadequate Supplies of Land on such Occasions—Extreme Fluctuations in Value of Property—Local Administration under a Superintendent—Increase of Population and Commerce—Export of Wool—Live Stock and their Fluctuations in Value—The boiling-down System—Tallow and Beef—Manufacturing Productions checked by the Gold Discoveries.

THE reputation of the Port Phillip settlement promptly aroused the attention of the people of New South Wales, who hastened to share with the Van Diemen's Land colonists the ample and rich pastures that had lain so long unknown and neglected in that quarter, and to supply with their live stock and other merchandise the promising market that was already established. While a small fleet of coasters from Van Diemen's Land landed their successive cargoes of live stock upon the grassy plains around Port Phillip, the Sydney flockmasters

supplied the stream from the opposite part of the country. These pioneers of Australian colonization had already reached in their own colony the banks of the Murrumbidgee, and the cool and elevated plains of Maneroo; and were settled considerably in advance of the furthest colonizing outposts, from whence Hovell and Hume, twelve years previously, had adventured upon their southern expedition. With a shorter and less precarious journey, as compared with that of these earlier travellers, the flocks and herds from the north now overspread the fine pastures between the Upper Murray, the Goulburn, and the Campaspé, until at length encountered in their southerly march by the advancing tide from Port Phillip. So rich was this country, so well adapted for these pastoral vocations, that this import of live stock, which had commenced towards the end of 1835, was converted into an export so early as the year 1838; and the fat stock of Port Phillip soon acquired, and have since maintained, a celebrity and pre-eminence in the markets of the adjacent colonies.

With these movements on the part of the people, the government at Sydney bestirred itself to take an official charge of the new settlement. In 1836, a resident magistrate was sent to Port Phillip, who convened a meeting of the colonists on the 1st of June of that year, with the view, amongst other

official objects, of composing the differences that had arisen upon the land question, and also of tempering the ardour of the new colonists in their wholesale appropriations of the fine territory they had entered upon. Placards were posted on the gum trees, intimating that no land could be acquired by conveyance or other pretence from the aborigines, or otherwise than by purchase and grant from the crown. A considerable number attended the meeting, and arbitrators were appointed to do their best to settle differences among the present occupants, to all of whom, however, there was allowed an ample range of the country until it should be otherwise required. It was estimated that the settlement then contained above four hundred persons.

The following year the sites of the principal towns of the district were selected and surveyed. Fawkner's selection was approved of as one of the sites, and was made that of the capital, receiving the name of Melbourne, in compliment to the reigning minister. At the mouth of the Yarra, on the west side, was the site of Williamstown, named after the sovereign. At the head of an arm of Port Phillip, penetrating considerably to the westward, was fixed the site for Geelong, so called from the native appellation of the locality. In the far west, on the shores of Portland Bay, approaching the South Australian boundary, and upon the site of the earliest

colonization of Victoria, was fixed the township of Portland.

A number of other townships have been subsequently founded by the government, none of which, however, can be said to have as yet advanced beyond the status of a village, although in some instances, as that of Kyneton, near Mount Alexander, there is the promise of considerable commerce and population. A few towns have also been founded by private enterprise in favourable localities, where considerable tracts of good land were bought by capitalists for the purpose. Of these, Brighton, upon the coast of Port Phillip, seven miles from Melbourne; Kilmore, forty miles to the north, upon the main Sydney road; and Belfast, on the western coast, near Portland, begin to emerge from the village rank, and to approach the population and importance, though not yet the compact appearance, of small English market-towns.

The judicious selection of the seaport of a colony is a circumstance whose importance can scarcely be overstated. The very life's blood of a young community consists in the imported articles of necessity or convenience with which it is enabled to supply itself from the productions of longer settled countries. Young colonies have, in a comparative degree, no facilities wherewith to institute manufactures of their own. Their time can generally

be employed to much greater advantage in raising largely some produce that may be available in other markets, and for which their country happens to be adapted. Now the independent and permanent means of supplying these imports are this exchangeable produce, forming the exports of the colony. The defects of the capital seaport, therefore, act as a two-edged sword in cutting into the energies of the colonists; they weigh alike upon the introduction of the imports and the emission of the exports. They form an annual charge upon the country's resources, and diminish the annual supply of the imports, just as if so much of the export produce were annually lost or destroyed. With the increase of commerce year by year this charge soon reaches an enormous amount, although each year perhaps less visible by the effect of habit, and by the interests that have arisen in consequence, and become as it were vested in these difficulties.

Such is, to some extent, the case with Melbourne. In deciding upon its site, the chief recommendation appears to have been the immediate vicinity of the fresh water of the river Yarra. In other respects it has serious drawbacks. The town is situated nine miles by the river's course from the anchorage in Hobson's Bay, and between these two points there are two bars or shallows, having in general only about nine feet of water at full tide. The river,

too, is so circuitous, that from no direction will any one wind send a vessel up to the town. Under these circumstances, delays and expenses have been from the first an incessant drag, and it is only the great resources of the colony that have enabled her still to maintain a rapid progress. These inconveniences have been particularly experienced since the recent gold discoveries, and the immense increase of commerce that has so promptly followed.

The press of business has rendered the means of lighterage by the river altogether inadequate, involving long and expensive delay to the shipping, and a charge equal to a second freight upon the merchandise; for, on repeated occasions, the rate for the last nine miles of the voyage from Britain to Melbourne has been equal to that of the first fourteen thousand, while the shorter passage was far less diligently and carefully accomplished. But, as generally happens in such cases, the sharpness of the crisis has led at length to the institution of comprehensive and effective schemes of improvement, that promise, although not without considerable preliminary outlay, to meet all principal difficulties.

The immediate vicinity of fresh water has usually, for very obvious reasons, a commanding influence in regard to the site of a capital or seaport. The ready access to such a daily and hourly necessary

of life is ever present to the colonist, who is more occupied with his own momentary convenience than with any general questions affecting the future. But this advantage is usually much overrated, at least in localities where water is attainable at reasonable distances by artificial carriage. At an early stage of a town, its own drainage disqualifies the water of any subjacent stream; nor can the river above the town be reserved and protected without the prevention or sacrifice of many useful enterprises; and it is always eventually necessary, and the sooner the better, to institute some independent artificial supply that will conduct a copious and pure stream of this necessary of life from some elevated level to every street and every dwelling-house. The make-shift of the Yarra has in this respect been the most serious obstacle to the health and progress of Melbourne; and when at length other resources are now to be sought, long after the wants and means of the town had warranted this proceeding, the scene of operation presents the aspect of an Augean stable of such filth and unwholesomeness as would disconcert a second Hercules with a legion of followers.

The site of Geelong, the qualities of its harbour, and the rich, beautiful, and open country that extends for many miles behind it, appear to me to have offered recommendations for the site of the

capital decidedly superior to those of Melbourne. A bar, on which there is but nine feet of water at full tide, crosses the mouth of the inner harbour. This impediment could be cut through at a moderate expense, far inferior to that of the tedious and interminable labour of deepening and maintaining for navigation purposes the winding channel of the Yarra—a project that seems now given up. Had the colonial capital been at Geelong, behind this bar, the obstacle had long since been removed, and a way thus opened for fleets of merchantmen into the finest and most sheltered haven.

Geelong has the advantage over its rival of greater facilities for drainage, and the town is supplied with superior building materials. The rich available land also with which it is connected, much greater in extent than is found around Melbourne, requires at the same time less of preliminary outlay in the clearing of rocks and timber to bring it into use. Had it been assigned the conspicuous position of the colonial capital, and been thus brought more prominently into notice, the greater advantages of Geelong might have still further enhanced the high repute and attractiveness of the colony.

Melbourne, however, by the prestige it has enjoyed as the capital, and by a site not without its advantages, is now far ahead of its contemporary sister, and is perhaps not likely to forfeit in the fu-

ture this superiority. The centralizing effect of the gold discoveries, in directing to Melbourne nearly all the capital, commerce, and population that are flowing into the colony, has of late still more powerfully contributed to this superiority. But there will always exist a considerable and rival capital in Geelong, dividing those operations which, under a happier selection, might almost all have been carried out with more effect in one central spot, where there would most likely have stood at the present day an Australian city, even already of European magnitude, and more elegant, rich, and populous, than those two conjoined, which at present divide between them the commercial and general intercourse of Victoria.

Melbourne is situated for the most part upon two rising grounds, and overspreads also the intermediate valley. The Eastern Hill is the most considerable of these eminences, and over an extensive and gentle acclivity, or rather for the most part an elevated plain, it furnishes a fine and commanding site for the residences of the colonists, whence they survey the noble harbour of Port Phillip, and the lively spectacle, now almost of hourly occurrence, of the arriving and departing shipping. In other respects, however, the beauties of the capital are less pretending. The town was originally laid out on the rectangular principle, and unfortunately

this poverty-stricken design has been since almost uniformly adhered to, even long after the obvious destinies of the place had warranted a more varied and graceful selection from the ample list of mathematical forms.

The same unanticipated greatness that probably at first recommended the summary simplicity of the rectangles was also the occasion of other disadvantages. The town is intersected by conveniently broad streets, which in their lengthened straightness over a perfect level or a gentle acclivity, impart rather an imposing appearance, more particularly if the imagination is permitted to overlook the discordant little edifices by which either side of the thoroughfare is at present variegated, and to realize a page of the future, under the auspices of enterprising colonists and inexhaustible gold-fields. Between the parallel lines of these creditable streets, however, the distance being considerable, there are parallel lanes, originally intended to furnish a back or carriage entrance to each allotment—an arrangement made under the impression, no doubt, that the quiet semi-rural people, into whose hands the modestly-born Melbourne was expected to fall, would occupy each his entire half-acre, extending from the street to the lane. These town properties, however, rising promptly to a most unlooked for value, the lanes in question, where

sections and frontages were of course cheaper than in the broad streets, soon became the chief lines of traffic and population, and they have consequently proved a very unfavourable arrangement for the health of the town.

Taken altogether, Melbourne, with regard to its natural scenery, cannot be called a handsome or picturesque city. In this respect it is immeasurably inferior to Sydney and Hobarton in the adjacent colonies, and even to Geelong, whose commanding site, united to the placid beauties of its harbour scenery, gives it an exceedingly pleasing effect. The only chance of redeeming the dull uniformity of the Melbourne landscape has been lost in the persistence with the rectangular system of its streets, and in the paucity of those relieving glades in the forest of houses, namely, the squares, the crescents, and the other forms, which comprise emphatically the lungs of towns, and present a lively and healthful arena for the wives and families, the military and music, the parade and finery, of a rapidly extending and prosperous city. But, above all, has the chance been lost in permitting the extension of the town across the hollow that intervenes between the two hills. The inhabitants have thus lost, in exchange for a crowded and busy street, subject to inundation, difficult of drainage, and permanently unhealthy to the thousands of its denizens, a charm-

ing interval of the native sod, with its picturesque old gum trees, its artificial ponds and reservoirs of water, and the *tout ensemble* of a Hyde Park in a young southern London that would of itself have creditably redeemed the excessive plainness of Victoria's capital.

The appearance of the town of Melbourne, at the first glimpse obtained by the newly arrived colonists, seems to impress them very differently. I have been repeatedly amused, while accompanying a large body of newly arrived emigrants by one of the river steamers up to town, at the various and contradictory opinions that began to be expressed, as they stared about them with a visible interest and curiosity, on being landed at the wharf. As a general rule, educated and thinking minds express surprise and admiration at the busy aspect and the indication of rapid progress they see around them. But with a great proportion of the immigrants the expression is one of complete disappointment. They look around upon diminutive houses, many of them of wood, with a very tenth-rate appearance, and upon roads that are ever in the agonies of construction, and of course for the time making matters worse than before. Their appeals to carters, porters, and other labouring fraternity, are not responded to with the prompt step, the ready hand, and the cheap rates of the same classes they have

left behind them; and at every step they are disturbed by experience of unwonted expense and inconvenience. In a land of roses they had never reckoned upon the thorns, nor reflected that the prevailing inconveniences that so annoy them, are in reality but a gaping sphere awaiting their own labour. The heavy expenses they encounter are but one of the evidences of those prevailing profits and high wages the rumour of which had been the main inducement to their own emigration, and which some who had preceded them in the outward race were already enjoying, although for the present at their expense.

Before concluding this digression upon towns and villages, I must devote a few lines to a description of one of the most conspicuous geographical objects of the colony—the Harbour of Port Phillip. This spacious and land-locked basin is about thirty-five miles in length from north to south, and extends to upwards of forty in its greatest breadth from the eastern shores to the western extremity of the Inner Harbour of Geelong. The entrance from Bass Strait is by a passage scarcely two miles in width, where the rush of tide to and from the outer waters occasions a considerable commotion. This disturbing cause is aggravated by the unequal depth of the channel, whose rocky irregularities beneath the surface produce a seething and agitated

appearance like the boiling of some huge cauldron, and prove rather alarming to passengers by the smaller shipping. But the weary emigrant is ever delighted, after his protracted voyage from the antipodes, to glide almost instantaneously from the tempestuous ocean into a sheltered and tranquil haven.

In nautical phraseology the port is one of difficult entrance, and should never be attempted, at least by strangers, during the night. The pilot station is at Shortland's Bluff, on the western shore of the entrance channel, where there is also a lighthouse. The occurrence of several distressing wrecks before the pilots could render any assistance has indicated the necessity for an outside pilotage, for which I believe arrangements are now in progress. Proceeding inwards, at about five miles from the entrance, there commences a series of sandbanks, through which however there are several channels for navigation, admitting the largest vessels. These banks, which are deposited by the tidal stream as it gradually loses the motion that had held the sand in suspension, extend for about ten miles, and beyond their range there is an ample depth of water. The narrowness of the entrance restricts the effect of the tides within, whose rise and fall make usually a difference of only three feet.

Towards the northern extremity is Gellibrand's Point, where there is another lighthouse, and where

the shipping are assembled off Williamstown, the port of Melbourne, in a small and sheltered haven at the head of Port Phillip, called Hobson's Bay. A remarkable arm of this inland sea, taking an extensive stretch to the south-west, terminates in the beautiful harbour of Corio or Inner Geelong. The larger class of shipping bound for this latter port discharge their cargoes outside of the bar off Point Henry, about six miles from the town, by means of lighters. Half of the annual wool clip of the colony is now shipped here, and there are already semi-daily steamers plying in the bay between Melbourne and Geelong.

The scenery on approaching Port Phillip from the sea is uninviting. The coast has a sterile and monotonous appearance, not at all calculated to satisfy the anticipations of Australia Felix. At some little distance from the shore there is no indication of any break in the continuity of the coast line, and the sudden opening of the tranquil expanse of the interior waters has rather a pleasing effect. In sailing up the bay there is nothing of particularly striking aspect. The hills of the eastern coast are too remote for the effect of their picturesque little gullies and picnic inviting rocks and forests; and the rising ground of Indented Head has a tame uniform appearance, although verdant and pleasing in the cooler seasons during

two-thirds of the year. To the north-west is a vast grassy plain, girded by remote hills of an ordinary appearance; and the hopes of the sanguine emigrants are destined to be again disappointed by the aspect of Williamstown and its vicinity. A dull low shore here indicates alike the termination of the bay and the near vicinity of the capital, whose smoke and roofs and red brick walls have for an hour before been seen looming over the tops of some intermediate trees. The cottages and country houses of the extending suburbs stretch to a considerable distance along the eastern shore, and prettily diversify the sombre forest. But, generally speaking, in the contest between Art and Nature, the latter appears to have carried the day; for we gaze with the higher pleasure upon a forest of magnificent shipping, and the lively indications upon every side of a prosperous and important colony.

In the year 1837, the Port Phillip settlement was honoured with a visit from the then governor of New South Wales, Sir Richard Bourke, who confirmed the selections that had been made of the principal towns. Accordingly, on the 1st June of that year, the first sale of the public lands of the province took place. It was held at Melbourne, and consisted of a portion of the allotments or half-acre sections of that township. The novel scene attracted a considerable attendance, consist-

ing, amongst others, of some capitalists or their agents from Sydney and Van Diemen's Land. £40 to £50 each was a common rate realized on this occasion for some of the best of these allotments, and this was regarded at the time as a considerable price, notwithstanding the fair prospects of the place. Some buyers, in the first pangs of doubt as to the speculation, were said to have been desirous of even throwing up their bargains after payment to the government of the cash-deposit of ten per cent. One allotment so actually surrendered is still pointed out. The sanguine bidder, in the spirit of the contest for a "first-rate lot," had adventured to the unusual extent of £80. In his sober moments he preferred to forfeit the £8 deposit, rather than pay £72 for a piece of ground that within three years of this transaction was valued at £5000. The ground was subsequently bestowed by the government on the sect of the Wesleyan methodists for the erection of their church, in accordance with the present colonial practice of affording aid to the different religious bodies by donations of land for sites of churches, and of pecuniary assistance from the public revenue.

And now commenced one of those extraordinary scenes of speculative prosperity, such as were wont to be presented to us only in the rare instances of Mississippi and South Sea schemes, until our recent

experience of Californian operations, and for the second time, of Victoria herself, after the discovery of her boundless gold-fields. The reputation of Port Phillip as a field of colonization was rapidly assuming the first position, running in this respect a race with the adjacent colony of South Australia, which had been founded about the same time, and had then begun to exhibit the same symptoms. Colonists, armed with capital in every variety of form, arrived almost daily in an increasing tide from every direction—from Van Diemen's Land, from New South Wales, and latterly in a direct stream from Britain.

Shortly before this period, the present surveyor-general of New South Wales, Sir Thomas Mitchell, had published the highly interesting account of his explorations in the Port Phillip District, undertaken in the year 1836. The traveller's unvarnished tale of open forest dales, of grassy hills and glades, and verdant vales, and all those landscape beauties that induced him to bestow on so promising a part of this country the distinctive title of Australia Felix, fell with irresistible effect upon many ardent spirits in the mother country, long enchained in a dull routine of incessant and unrequited labour. The mania of locomotion had for some time been recognised in Van Diemen's Land under the title of the Port Phillip fever. In Britain, the direct emigration

to Port Phillip began in 1839, and soon became very considerable.

Among such an increasing multitude, with all its wants and its means, its sanguine temperament and its prospects, the sale and resale, the dividing and subdividing of allotments, went on at a brisk pace. An army of dealers and a legion of lawyers were alike busy and alike thriving. In the brief space of two years allotments that originally brought £40 were currently valued at £4000. Three such properties were sold together in a single lot for £10,000; and the fortunate capitalist expatiated on the expectancies from his purchase when he had put into operation the magic art of cutting up into fragments, intersecting with lanes, and carving into innumerable frontages. Such was the mania for land dealing that the law expenses for conveyancing and ascertaining titles had in frequent instances attained to a larger amount than the whole value of the land they referred to; and in the haste and irregularity of business that characterized the times, this security was occasionally all that remained to the lawyer for his accumulated bill.

The titles to property fell, in many instances, into great confusion, defying the sagacity of the whole legal brigade to keep them straight. Not only were inexperienced and unqualified practitioners as busy at conveyancing as the rest, making confusion

worse confounded; but the dealers themselves, unconcerned about the past, and anxious only about fresh bargains, would carve up and transfer their sections like so many goods and chattels, passed to one another under a pencil memorandum, to be completed at a more leisure season that would never arrive. Transfers were registered of sales that were never completed, and sales that were completed and paid for were never registered at all. Then came the operation of the wife's dower (at that time, although not now, a condition of the law), running a bar sinister of its own kind through many a bargain, in the settlement of which perhaps it had never been alluded to or even thought of. And, finally, the government, with a paternal zeal for the interests of this chaos, seemed to take especial care that the titles to these lands should not acquire any vulgar simplicity by too prompt an issue of the Crown Grant. Two years' delay in the issue of this necessary document had been experienced; twelve months was common. When the daily warfare of sale and resale, and of dividing and subdividing lots, had proceeded to some considerable extent, and with confusion enough already, in all conscience, forth came at last the long-looked for Crown Grant, on which the whole operations depended and being dated neither on the day of sale, nor the day of payment of the land, but on the

deferred and accidental date of the issue of the document, all was again thrown out.

Governments are not responsible for these land mania that occasionally take possession of the people; but they command the means of greatly impairing their destructive effects, and at the same time of appropriating, by common consent, to the public uses the money so freely offered on such occasions. These plethoric times afford also a means, when thus met by the authorities, of settling large numbers of colonists upon the colonial lands. The high prices to which land otherwise attains are, in a very vital point, peculiarly hurtful to the interests of the colony. The newly arrived emigrant, for example, during such times of high prices, is in general quite unable to compete at land-buying with the wealthy resident; and he reports to his friends at home, as one of his heaviest discouragements, these impracticable rates of the colonial lands. In these early times of Port Phillip, the government might, with general benefit, have appropriated, in exchange for some fraction of its boundless domain, immense sums that were thus so freely tossed about among the colonists. The mania, however, ran a comparatively useless riot, ending eventually in complicated engagements that could not be met; and occasioning throughout its course a ruinous extravagance in business and private life, certainly not the less real

because for the time appearing in the light of the expenditure of *bona fide* profits, that mingled indiscriminately with the more modest results of productive and useful industry.

The best and perhaps the only effectual cure under such circumstances, is to throw an ample supply of the coveted article of land into so ravenous a market. On the one hand, the government stock of this commodity was inexhaustible; on the other, the people were willing and extensive buyers; while, at the same time, the money they offered was all usefully available for the public service. It must now be regretted that on two several occasions—namely, that which we are at present engaged with, and that which has more recently followed upon the late gold discoveries—the local government have not adequately dealt out the great imperial domain under their charge, whose sections and allotments are happily such attractive objects to the emigrant colonist. This restrictive procedure has both excited dissatisfaction and prevented benefit. A more bounteous course might have advantaged every party, and have already placed the colony in a more advanced position than it now enjoys, both as to social status and physical improvement.

This reign of speculative prosperity seemed to have reached its culmination in 1840. Large quantities of capital and a strong tide of immigration still

pouring in, prevented the suddenness of the reactionary crash that must otherwise have taken place. In the hope of better times, large sums were borrowed for present necessities; and fresh means and *fresh buyers still maintained a lingering conflict* against the downward course of prices. But at length every aid was inadequate to sustain the tumbling edifice, with all its accumulated top-weight. Through the failure of the land-fund in 1841, the immigration, which had been stimulated by a government bonus to each individual of certain classes of steerage passengers, payable out of the proceeds of the land sales, began sensibly to fall off in 1842, —a circumstance that tended to increase the reigning depression and difficulties. In 1843 and 1844, the allotments that had been valued at so many thousands, were thought well sold if they realized an equal number of hundreds; and house and landed property was commonly disposed of for the mere amount of the former annual rental.

Extraordinary indeed are the ups and downs to which some of the more thriving of our colonies are subjected, exposed as they are to all the irregularities that attend upon the fitful commerce, the restless enterprise, and sanguine temperament of our people. A black cloud of old engagements had hung over the colonists; but it was all at length discharged or compromised. The year 1845 saw the

Port Phillip settlement once more in a state of visible prosperity. I say visible, because in reality the province had all along made rapid progress in the elements of real wealth—in the numbers of its live stock for example, in the export of its fine wool, and in the general improvement of the country. In 1851, when the astounding discovery of the gold-fields burst upon Australia, those fickle allotments, those fluctuating blocks and sections—city, rural, and suburban—might be said to have once more overtaken those envied ranges of valuation that a speculative spirit had called into premature existence twelve years before. But this time the value was legitimate and permanent, the fruit of actual attainments and of rational anticipation, and every year was adding to its amount. The effect of the gold discoveries in Victoria has been to immensely accelerate this increase. Millions of gold flowing into a small community soon made everything dear, in proportion to the increase of the means of purchasing. The allotment whose value was £50 in 1837, that rose to £4000 in 1839, that collapsed to £400 in 1844, and that, like the phenix of old rose from its ashes to the attractive beauty of £4000 once more in 1851, would in 1853 have readily realized £15,000. In various parts of the suburbs the rise in value was in a still greater ratio; nor did it seem likely that the middle of 1853 had

seen the culminating period of this new and extraordinary turn in colonial commerce.

The rising importance of the settlement, and its great distance from the seat of government at Sydney, soon called for some larger powers of local administration than were derived from the meagre authority of a local magistracy. Accordingly, in 1839, a resident head of the government, under the title of Superintendent of Port Phillip, was appointed from Sydney, in the person of Mr La Trobe, who arrived in the settlement in October of that year, and who has continued in his charge up to the present time, with the enhanced title and honours of Lieutenant-governor of Victoria, conferred upon the occasion of the separation of the Port Phillip District from New South Wales. A Customs establishment, under a sub-collector, had been already formed at Melbourne towards the end of 1836, whose operations were afterwards extended to Geelong and Portland. The staff of this deputy or assistant government was finally rendered complete by the arrival from Sydney, in March 1841, of a resident judge, Mr Willis; of a deputy sheriff, crown solicitor, and other legal officers; and by the simultaneous establishment of a Supreme Court within the province.

Amidst all the commercial fluctuations to which the Port Phillip district had been subjected, its progress twice was equally extraordinary and unprece-

dented among British colonies. In 1841, the population amounted to a little over 11,000; in 1851, at the era of separation, it had attained to 80,000 colonists. Melbourne, the capital, was in 1841 a small scattered town of 4500 inhabitants, who threaded their mazy way through unmade thoroughfares, plentifully variegated by deep holes, dangerous gullies, and remnants of old trees, and who were fain to suspend their evening intercourse and festivities for the seasons of the full moon, that the Queen of Night might guide them safely in their intricate travels. In 1843, the municipal corporation was launched into existence, and one of its earliest proceedings was a vigorous campaign against the gum-tree stumps that everywhere met the eye in the midst of the streets and pathways of the rustic town. In the middle of 1851, Melbourne, whose population had already attained to 25,000 souls, exhibited her principal streets in the highest state of repair, substantially macadamized in the broad carriage-way, with open side-drains and kerbed footpaths. Many churches and public buildings had arisen or were in course of erection, and the substantial and considerable shops might have vied with those of a second-rate town in England. I do not allude to the changes and the progress that have occurred since the discovery of gold. These have been still more extraordinary, and in less than two

years have given to the city and its suburbs a population of not less than 80,000 souls, together with an amount of wealth and commerce, of income and profits, far beyond what is usually met with in towns of this extent elsewhere.

Prior to the discovery of gold, the staple commodity of the colony was wool. No feature of Australia is more remarkable, or has proved more felicitous for its early progress, than that of the natural adaptation of a large portion of the country for pasturage. The colonist found on every side of him land ready-made for use, without any of that first cost of time and capital that are the usual and often serious preliminaries elsewhere in forming the settlements of civilisation upon primeval soils. With his small capital of live stock, he entered at once upon a productive field. The sheep, cattle, and horses, commenced by the comparatively tiny stream of importation from Van Diemen's Land, afterwards increased by the larger droves that poured overland from the older settlement of New South Wales, were soon far outstripped in number by the supply afforded from the internal increase, as these various live stock spread themselves over the vacant country, and revelled alike in the finest climate and in unwonted abundance of pastoral vegetation. A small commencement was made in the export of wool in 1836. But the limited clip of the settle-

ment for that early year in Port Phillip history made its exit unnoticed, and does not appear on the official export list. The following year the quantity amounted to 175,000 lbs. weight, the value of the export being £14,000. In 1844, this quantity had increased to 4,326,000 lbs.; in 1848, to 10,525,000 lbs.; and in 1852, to no less than 20,247,000 lbs.

As the colony advanced in population and resources, other branches of commerce were developed. The commercial reaction and depression that succeeded the early speculations of the colonists, bore the usual good fruits on such occasions, by arousing a spirit of economy and industry, that tended in many particulars to the discovery of new colonial resources and the indication of several new channels of commerce. Agriculture received a considerable impetus and extension, and the success of depasturing pursuits stimulated an adventurous search throughout every accessible part of the territory for additional tracts of land available for the support of sheep and cattle. The far recesses of the north-west, covered in great measure by a dense Mallee scrub, were explored in the region of the Lower Wimmera, and beyond the remote site of Lake Hindmarsh; and the enterprising squatter, gradually pushing his stations and outposts across the wide intervening space, at length emerged upon

the southern bank of the Murray, whose banks upon either side were already planted with pastoral stations. Many available tracts, the valleys and elevated plains of Gipps' Land, were sought out and occupied amidst the lofty mountain scenery and frigid climate of that district. Finally, crossing the broad stream of the Murray, the dividing boundary of Victoria, the colonists poured their flocks and herds along the northern banks of that river, and, overstepping one another in the pastoral race, ascended for nearly three hundred miles the remote banks of the Darling, from whence they transmitted to Port Phillip their annual clip of the golden fleece by an overland journey of seven hundred miles.

The low prices to which live stock had fallen in the year 1843, led to the practice, amounting almost to the merit of a discovery, as it seems never to have been thought of previously in the colony, of rendering the stock into tallow by the process of boiling down the carcass. This practice, originating in New South Wales, quickly spread into the Southern District, and powerfully assisted the reaction that was then happily succeeding to the late commercial depression. In 1845, the value of sheep rose to nearly double the rates that were current in the previous year. Cases had occurred in the Sydney district of sheep having been sold at 1s. per head, and, in one recorded instance, even as low as 7d.

In that locality, which has never been so productive in its pastoral pursuits as its younger rival to the south, it began in this time of depression to be even doubted if stock and stations were worth having at all, or if they could be carried on as regarded some of the remoter localities without actual loss.

In the Port Phillip district, sheep had been sold, in 1843 and the earlier part of 1844, at a rate as low as 2s. 6d. per head, with the right of station. The tallow rendering process, however, proved that a sheep, in average good condition, was worth at least 4s. to 5s., and this amount afterwards reached a considerably higher sum, as the boiling establishments, under the stimulus of competition, improved their processes, and sought out the best markets for the considerable refuse of skins, bones, hoofs, and manure. The colony thus entered upon the manufacturing department, and at the same time extended the basis of its commercial relations by the production of a second article of export—Tallow.

The manufacture and export of tallow soon became an important branch of Port Phillip trade. At the commencement, in 1844, the quantity exported was 429 tons. But the sudden rise soon afterwards in the price of live stock had nearly proved fatal to this nascent branch of colonial commerce; for in 1846 the quantity exported fell to 112 tons. A revival, however, took place in the following

year, and in 1848 the quantity rose to 1345 tons, while in 1850 it had increased to 4489 tons. A vigorous business, upon an extended scale, had commenced with the succeeding year; but towards the fourth quarter, which was usually the season of the largest manufacture, the work was interrupted, and in some cases summarily put an end to, by the consequences that resulted to the labour market from the discovery of the gold-fields. The quantity for 1851 attained, nevertheless, to 4223 tons. The quantity for 1852 fell to 1991 tons; and we are to estimate the results in this branch of trade, for the present, and perhaps for many future years, at very considerably less. The curing of colonial beef, a similarly dawning trade, has been in like manner checked by the same event,—an event that has poured a deluge of wealth upon the colony, but not without suspending, and perhaps destroying, some of her incipient and promising branches of commerce. We are not, however, to regret such results in these particular instances just noticed, arising as they do from the recent great increase both in the numbers and prosperity of our fellow-colonists, and from the use, as human food, of that superfluous live stock which was wont to be exported as the unrequired surplus of a colony much smaller, less important, and less promising than our present Victoria.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SQUATTING SYSTEM.

Squatting System in Australia—Origin in New South Wales and Victoria—Status of the Squatter—Progress of pastoral Occupation —Contentions for *Runs*—Encounters with Aborigines—New Regulations and Discontent of the Squatters—Opposition—Efforts of the Pastoral Association—The Orders in Council—Description of Squatting Life and Pursuits — Changes with the new Regulations — Opposition to the Squatting Privileges—Position of Victoria as to this Question—Increased Difficulties since the Gold Discoveries—Advisable to change or abolish the Orders—Question of Compensation—Progress of the Colony, and prospective Decline of Squatting.

The title of squatter, where it has come into use in other parts of the world, represents for the class to which it applies but a moderate status in the social scale. Although the case is now very different in Australia, no great interval has elapsed since a similarity of association prevailed there also. The Australian squatter in earlier times was a sort of semi-outcast of society, a Robin Hood or Rob Roy, with the distinction of everything being degrading and nothing elevating in his career; in short, generally an old convict of the penal settlement of New South Wales, who planted himself on the highways,

or in the corners of colonial estates, where, under pretence of depasturing live stock on the unsold Crown Lands, he carried on a system of petty plunder upon all around him.

But with the growth of the colony increased also the importance of the vocation of depasturing stock upon these boundless domains. A pursuit in which an honest and encouraging livelihood was attainable gradually attracted within its sphere respectable members of society, and it became necessary to impose some check upon the disorderly characters who formed the earlier components of the body. Accordingly, in 1836, an act was passed by the legislature of New South Wales imposing a small semi-annual assessment upon the live stock, with the view of defraying from the proceeds a body of mounted police, who should protect the squatting districts. The Executive government at the same time provided that none should be entitled to depasture live stock on the Crown Lands, unless having first been granted a license at the hands of a Commissioner of Crown Lands appointed for the purpose.

This combined plan was a great improvement upon the previous state of things. The license was renewable annually at the pleasure of the crown, so that an official check was imposed upon the character and doings of the licensees; and a small fee of £10, chargeable on each occasion, formed a fund to

defray the costs of the different commissioners' establishments.

The squatting system in the Port Phillip district had commenced just prior to this period. The commencement of the colony in this new locality, was in fact the commencement of squatting, which vocation was then and for fifteen years afterwards, until the discovery of the gold-fields, the chief interest of the country. On the Sydney side (to use the distinctive mode of speaking that was in use prior to the separation of Victoria), this system had been commenced in rapine and disorder, vulgarity and poverty, from which it had been gradually and laboriously purified. At Port Phillip, on the other hand, the squatting class had from the first been respectable, and attained in this particular, both as to the means and the social status of its members, a position equal or even superior to that of any other colonial vocation.

The mode of life was eminently attractive to many of the young, and even to the educated members of home society, who flocked out in considerable numbers to the rising settlement. The attractions were doubtless enhanced by the pleasant scenery of the country, a fine and bracing climate, a free and easy hospitality that became everywhere in the interior a sort of public right, and the prosperity that generally resulted from pastoral enterprise

under an average prudence of management. Many youths of finished education, the junior members of good families, were met with at the various sheep stations, whose homesteads, thus classicaly garnished, formed so many luminous points in the wilderness of the bush. These parties had either taken up "stations" for their own account on the vacant Crown Lands, or they were residing with friends and fellow-colonists in order to acquire some preliminary local experience. Separated as they thus found themselves from society and family ties, the life was not over favourable to a continuance of early discipline and study. The smock-frock, the black pipe, and a general indifference to the *personel*, often concealed the cultivated English gentleman. But the classic reminiscences had not entirely disappeared, and they still mingled their crystal stream to diversify the monotony of Australian pastoral life. The squatter, negligently reclining beneath the shade of a wide-spreading gum tree, recited old Horace as he gazed upwards through the scanty foliage upon a bright Australian sky; or he prescribed to himself a daily study from the fragments of a dilapidated Virgil, that were successively sacrificed to the lighting of tobacco pipes, or to other domestic necessities.

We have already seen that the first arriving parties from Van Diemen's Land effected a vast seizure

of the most promising parts of the country, extending all around the western shore of the Port Phillip estuary, and for some distance inland. These parties, although doubtful as to their right to the fee simple, yet clung firmly to the pastoral occupation. They exhibited, indeed, very inadequate flocks of sheep to justify their grasp of such a territory; but they maintained so bold a front, that rather than wage a doubtful battle, those who came after them preferred to take up independent ground of their own, although at a more inconvenient distance. In this manner, within about eighteen months, were the fine pasture lands as far as Mount Macedon to the north, and the Barwon, the Leigh, and the Moorabool rivers to the westward, occupied by the colonists and their flocks. These different parties, few and far between, formed nevertheless the nucleus of a promising colony. In the race of occupation one successively overstepped another. The stream from Port Phillip towards the north encountered the tide proceeding southward from the Sydney side, and then turned its course with renewed energy towards the more promising west, from whence reports of the most favourable character floated down upon the breeze to the ears of the eager colonists.

The great desideratum was a sufficient show of live stock, to give countenance to the occupation of

some considerable slice of the fine tracts of country that opened on every side upon the squatters. The demand for stock therefore was immense, and the prices of sheep, cattle, and horses rose in proportion. The state of the times, the speculative spirit, and the abundance of means, assisted this rise in the prices of this pastoral property, and gave occasion to extensive credit operations among the settlers, that operated in their effects very seriously upon many in after-times, and gave to the pastoral vocation a precariousness of aspect which did not of right belong to it.

There was not unfrequently in these early times a spirited race for priority of occupation, the Crown Land Commissioner being prepared to award the license for any choice localities to him who first arrived on the ground with his stock, and gave the requisite description of the run. One instance of this kind still survives among the local reminiscences, and was distinguished alike by the ardour of the chase and the value of the prize that depended on it. The colonists, spread over the beautiful region of Colac, had already reached the margin of the great field of "stony rises," situated to the south and west of Lake Corangamite, and forming a most remarkable feature of that part of the country. It began to be well known that beyond these rises lay some of the finest pastures of the settlement; and on

an early subsequent occasion two different and opposing parties, collecting together their little flocks, their drays, bullocks, and general munitions, started almost simultaneously for this land of promise.

The first, who never dreamed of encountering the labyrinth of the stony rises, turned his steps by the easy but circuitous route to the north of Corangamite. Proceeding in a westerly direction to the vicinity of Mount Elephant, he steered thence towards the south through an expansive plain, then but little appreciated, but which has since proved to be some of the best sheep pasture in the colony. The rival party, emboldened by the necessities of the case, and attracted by a locality already personally examined, plunged into the difficult and mysterious region of the rises, with all his inconvenient baggage and attendants. The journey which, like many other new attempts, appeared then so formidable, is now frequently accomplished, and the dray tracks may be followed up and down the interminable and vexatious hillocks. The direct line across this peculiar ground was about eight miles in extent; but the way in the present instance was made considerably longer by necessary deviations, by the uncertainty of the route, and, as is alleged, by the aberration of the compass among the ironstone. At length, however, the diminishing *tumuli* of the monotonous stones gave indications

of an approaching change; the grass and the forest once more appeared, and the successful party debouched soon after upon their magnificent pastures, in sufficient time, but with nothing to spare, to secure the prize of this adventurous journey.

In this gradual progress through the country, small bodies of the aborigines were everywhere encountered. They were particularly numerous around lakes and on the banks of rivers, where large quantities of fish were usually found. The largest numbers appeared upon the banks of the great river Murray. One famous locality, where they long maintained a warfare with the colonists, or rather where the colonists waged a war of extermination with them, was that around Eumaralla and Mount Eeles, where the stony rises afforded shelter to the blacks after their predatory excursions to the flocks of the settlers. In 1842, the colonists, who were then first occupying the Eumaralla district, found that locality occupied by five hundred aborigines. In 1844, when I myself had occasion to visit the same place, these natives were reduced to two hundred, and they have long since been still farther diminished, even to a mere fraction of this smaller number.

Several instances of atrocious conduct on the part of the colonists in these encounters with the natives were brought to light, and it was justly

apprehended that many more had not transpired to the authorities. Here and there a white man was found murdered,—a sacrifice it may be supposed to the anger or mistrust of the savages. But vengeance was taken by wholesale upon the poor black, without regard to any law save the worst of the Lynch description; and colonists were freely pointed out who had acquired a kind of local celebrity for the slaughter of scores of their fellow-beings. It is but justice to observe, however, that the authorities were ever prepared to institute proceedings in such cases, and to go to the last extremities where the difficult business of an adequate proof was procurable. The law knew no difference between the white and the black, as regarded the value of either life; and a case occurred in the vicinity of the locality I have just alluded to, which, but for a failure in the link of evidence, would have assuredly terminated in the public execution of several colonists, for a series of aboriginal murders, worthy, in cold-blooded atrocity, of the exploits of the most hardened bush-rangers.

Towards the end of 1843, the colonists with their flocks and herds had reached the western extreme of the province. I have already had occasion to allude to their enterprise in penetrating to the north and east. In the following year, crossing the Glenelg and the imaginary boundary line of the

141st meridian, they explored the South Australian territory, although but little inviting in this locality, and contended with some Adelaide colonists, who, more pinched in their pastoral areas than their Port Phillip neighbours, were already on the ground, for the occupation of some comparatively small tracts of available land.

Although, in squatting phraseology, the country was already stocked or occupied, the reader must not be led away by any ideas either of crowded live stock, or of some respectable proportion of human population. In 1844, it might still have been possible to have pursued a straight line through the entire province, without encountering a flock of sheep, a habitation, or a human being. The commissioners had distributed the land to every applicant according to the qualities of the *run*, and the numbers of the stock to be depastured upon it. Having an ample territory to dispense, they had dealt liberally with the comparative handful of applicants; and on the part of each squatter, every attempt was naturally made to procure an increase of that liberality in his own case, and to acquire a stock of spare ground against future contingencies.

But a fresh crowd was continually pouring into the interior in search of *runs*, that being the name given to these depasturing tracts of the squatters. Finding every available corner laid claim to, whether

justly or not, by some grasping predecessor, these newer colonists began to establish claims to particular tracts of the larger squattages, on the ground of their being held unnecessarily, their not being in actual use, or not being included in the description of the original license of the claimant. In this manner many succeeded in making good their footing. A system of closer packing, which the country could well sustain, was gradually put in force. The runs, as they became more valuable, were thus more skilfully treated, and more systematically *fed off*, so as by degrees to give every advantage the system would admit of for the support of the greatest number of live stock. Some whose large holdings led them to feel apprehensive of the reforming and equalizing spirit of the times, took opportunities of parting, for a pecuniary consideration, with their precarious outskirts to some one or other of the harpies who surrounded them. They sold a flock or two of sheep along with the disputable section of run, this precaution—namely, of selling, not the run, but the sheep that were on it—being necessary in order to legitimate the transaction. In this case the price of the sheep was made to include also that which had been agreed upon for the station. Others of the squatters, trusting to the friendship of the commissioner, or to their own ingenuity, contrived to hold intact their huge allot-

ments, the use of which in a few years, under a prudent management, realized to them a considerable fortune.

This system of encroaching and filling up, in general so advantageous to the colony, was not carried on, however, without much angry contention. The recruited bands of the squatters were ever recompacted, and rallied with fresh strength against the common enemy—the new comer. The duties of the commissioner became complicated and invidious as he attempted, in a vain contest with human nature, to deal alike impartially with those towards whom he felt himself friendly, hostile, or indifferent. His ears were ever open to *ex parte* statements, and the cases brought before him were decided upon no fixed principles beyond those of "equity and a good conscience,"—a perfect Will-o'-the-wisp, when they came to apply to opposing and complicated interests of property. These interests had now grown far too important and intricate for such vague and random adjudication; and the squatting system in this particular began to acquire a character of oppression, and to form a subject of very general complaint.

Under these arrangements the squatting system continued until the beginning of April 1844, when some changes were introduced by the Executive Government at Sydney, not in themselves of much

moment, but highly important from the consequences that attended them. The custom had previously been that each squatter could hold any quantity of land that he was permitted to possess, acquired either by original license or through subsequent purchase of live stock and station, by the payment of a single fee of £10 annually, provided his holdings did not extend to more than one commissioner's district. In this manner, the possessions of some parties, for so merely nominal a rental, had become enormous. Stations of one hundred square miles in area formed no uncommon pastoral estate. Some had two hundred square miles and upwards, even of the comparatively rich territory of Australia Felix; and in New South Wales, where the tracts were generally more sterile, the allowances were liberal in proportion, one squatter being represented, on the occasion of an official inquiry shortly before, as holding one thousand square miles, and another no less than eight thousand, or five millions of acres.

The change now introduced by the government was with the view of establishing some more just equality of charge amidst these great diversities in the extent of holdings. Each single license-fee was therefore to be restricted throughout the colony to a certain quantity of land, or more properly (the land being very unequal in quality) to a certain pastoral capability. It availed for the holding of

land sufficient to depasture 4000 sheep, or a proportionately smaller number of cattle, together with some reserve for their probable increase during the space of three years. Twenty square miles, it was thought, would suffice for this purpose; and accordingly this area was made the limit, except in cases where it was proved that the pastoral capability was inferior. In all cases, however small the extent of land, £10 was the minimum annual fee; and when intermediate quantities of sheep were depastured, a charge of £2, 10s. per 1000, for those beyond the 4000 or its multiples, was added to the license-fee.

These regulations aroused a most violent opposition in the colony—an opposition quite incomprehensible to those who looked merely on the surface, or were unacquainted with the circumstances and politics of the colony. To explain concisely some of these points, it may be remarked that the colonists were only just then beginning to emerge from commercial depression and difficulties, which from somewhat similar causes had spread almost simultaneously over the entire colony. The squatters had laboured under a full measure of difficulties with other classes, and every addition, however small, to the annual expenses of their business, was painfully conspicuous upon their annual balance-sheet; for ten pounds in these hard times might have well stood for fifty or even a hundred now. But the strongest opposition

arose from the political circumstances of the time affecting the case.

The colony had acquired, in the previous year, the first instalment of representative institutions; and the members of the new assembly, girding themselves for the combat, were not disposed to let slip any opportunity for extending the liberties of their country, and invading the wide domain of colonial prerogative. The choice of the electors had fallen largely upon the squatters, many of whom were already in the position of capitalists residing in the chief towns, or upon estates within the settled districts. This body, even in New South Wales, had now attained to a high respectability, and had acquired great influence and popularity, both from its conspicuous importance in the commerce of the colony, and the patriotism of its public men—a feature, however, that has since been obscured, both as to merits and usefulness, by a spirit of political exclusiveness. The majority of the assembly were squatters, or connected with squatting pursuits, although at this time this class of the colonists, in their quality of tenants of the crown, did not possess even the elective franchise which has since been conferred upon them.

To this assembly no subject had been more politically annoying than that of the uncontrolled administration on the part of the executive of the Crown Lands and their revenues. In colonies gen-

erally, the Crown Land question involved a mere waste of jungle or forest; and the only point at issue might be that of the upset price of the land in its sale to the public. Here, on the other hand, the entire area was covered with the property of the colonists, forming collectively a vast scene of industry, in the production of the great staple of the colony. The assembly had already advanced pretensions to these lands and their revenues. Sir George Gipps, who then administered the New South Wales government, a man of eminent ability, and quite a match for his aspiring legislature, opposed an uncompromising front to these political invasions. His Squatting Regulations of 2d April 1844 were framed and gazetted without concert, consultation, or even prior intimation to the legislature.

This uncompromising aspect was assumed on both sides, and the results of these proceedings became, step by step, of grave consequence to the colony. One of the earliest results was the refusal to reinstitute the act for the assessment of the live stock, the fund derived from which had hitherto maintained the mounted police for the protection of the squatting districts. The council, to whose cognizance this impost pertained, refused to tax their fellow-colonists any further in a department in which the executive took upon itself to increase their taxation at its pleasure. The act in question, therefore, whose duration had expired about this time, was

not renewed, and the mounted police force and the districts they protected were alike left to shift for themselves.

But the circumstance that was eventually attended by the most important effects was the formation of "The Pastoral Association." The original object of this body was to place the squatting interest upon a more secure and satisfactory footing. The pecuniary amount involved in the change effected by the executive, as regarded the charge imposed upon the squatter, soon came to be regarded as quite unimportant in the contest. Prosperity dawned apace upon the squatters. They would admit that the new rate was not unreasonable, although perhaps imposed prematurely; but they protested against the principle by which an irresponsible authority, of its own sole accord, without any notice, without any guaranteed principle of action, could thus impose changes upon a great colonial interest, involving an important body of the public. The object, therefore, was twofold:—1st, To obtain a guarantee against such arbitrary changes in future; and, 2d, To secure the occupants of the pastoral lands against the uncertain action and unconstitutional influence of the Commissioners of Crown Lands, who had already been enacting some vexatious and fantastic proceedings among their numerous tenantry.

The cause of the association was thus mixed up

with that of political rights. It consequently carried a very popular aspect, and enrolled many members, including, I think, the whole representative proportion of the legislature. The views of the squatters enlarged with the prosperity of their cause. By the original understanding they held their lands until these territories were otherwise required in the progress of the colony, making of them in the meantime what advantage they could, and being subject to no charge save the trifling rates for license and assessment. To render these holdings more satisfactory, they had asked for protection against the arbitrary power of the crown and its agent the commissioner. They now revolved the still superior position of holding the lands, not only against commissioners and fellow-squatters, but against the colonial public. When it was resolved to agitate this cause before Parliament and the Home Government, the squatters had already determined to make a stand for definitive and exclusive leases of the waste lands. The proposal of a term of fourteen years, at first a subject of some sceptical merriment, became at length a familiar theme; and as they arrayed the forces they could bring to bear upon the home authorities in the battle, hope gradually dawned on the horizon, and hope eventually became reality and victory.*

* I myself happened to be in Sydney at the time of the founding of the Pastoral Association in April 1844. Even from the first a few of

The result of these various preparations was the famous "Orders in Council" of March 1847, issued in consequence of powers in regard to the squatting question, specially granted by parliament to the Queen. By these regulations the whole of the waste or Crown Lands of New South Wales, whose limits it must be remembered still included the future Victoria, were divided into three classes, called respectively the Settled, the Intermediate, and the Unsettled districts. On the Sydney side but little change was necessary to adapt the territory in that direction to this arrangement, as the two terms already in use there, namely, "the colony within," and "the colony beyond the boundaries of location," answered generally to the two last respectively of the new nomenclature. In the Port Phillip district, on the other hand, all was change. The Settled districts were comprised chiefly in certain circuits around the chief towns, namely, of twenty-five miles around Melbourne, fifteen miles around Geelong, and ten miles around Portland and Alberton. There was also a reservation of two miles on each side of the river Glenelg within certain limits of its course, and of three miles inland along the

the principal New South Wales squatters mooted the subject of the fourteen years' leases. At the hospitable board of one of the largest of these squatters, I well recollect some of the earlier receptions of this proposition, which was then responded to literally by shouts of laughter.

entire line of seacoast. The Intermediate district comprised the counties either then established, or to be established, prior to 31st December 1848. The Unsettled district embraced the remainder of the territory.

The squatters who were scattered over all these intended districts, and who had all hitherto been subjected to one and the same kind of regulations, were now to be very differently dealt with. The local government was empowered to expose the runs situated within the Settled districts to public auction for a lease for each year. The occupants of the Intermediate districts were to have eight years' leases, subject to sixty days' notice at yearly intervals regarding such parts as were required for sale; and those of the Unsettled districts fourteen years' leases, with a right if the lands were still unsold to a second term of fourteen years, subject to fees or charges not exceeding fifty per cent. on the current rates, or the rates of the first term. Both of these last classes were to have pre-emptive rights over the land, at a valuation that was not to be less than 20s. per acre, by which, if they themselves were buyers, the lands in their respective occupation were exempted from the usual mode of sale to the other colonists by public auction.

These Orders in Council, as may readily be supposed from the short sketch here given, involve

very important and at the same time exclusive privileges to one particular class of colonists; and they have therefore since become the subject of a very angry altercation in the two colonies to which they are applicable, and particularly in Victoria. I am anxious therefore in this place, and before entering deeper into so turbulent a department of the squatting question, to give the reader some further illustrations of Australian pastoral life. This mode of existence, so secluded, and so eminently placid and contented in its aspect, forms indeed a striking contrast to any description of strife.

A squatting station of the considerable extent to which many of these have now attained in Victoria, exhibits an interesting and rather imposing aspect. The "Homestead," as the head-quarters are termed, might still recall, by a lingering primitiveness of outward aspect, the early days of Port Phillip squatting. But time and prosperity had proved strong temptations to improvement; and the romantic mind of some earlier squatter, which delighted in the spectacle of the pristine simplicity of the bush, might be shocked at the display of modern conveniences and luxuries. This would particularly strike him when he had transferred his view to the inside of that homestead which he was wont in old times to term emphatically "the huts." Instead of chairs and tables, couches and benches, roughly put together

during long leisure hours by the squatter himself or his servants, there might now be seen the most elegant English-made mahogany, soft easy chairs, and beds beyond description comfortable. The original home-made furnishings, at first condemned to the kitchen, had possibly been transferred from thence to the fire, unless preserved by the curious as relics of exploded barbarism.

Some there were whose ambition, breaking through the ties that connected them with the original homestead, led them to select adjacent sites whereon they constructed substantial or elegant mansions. A feeling of general confidence prevailed, even some years prior to the Orders in Council, that the parties who made these substantial buildings and improvements upon lands still the property of the crown would not in the end be sufferers, even under the necessity of bringing the station or any part of it to sale. This was of course a reasonable and therefore a well grounded prospect, and took away from the feeling of risk that would have otherwise attended these operations.

There was generally, however, a disposition to linger around the good old home. If it had passed through several purchasers, every successive occupant had put a hand to it. Every member of the family had some dear little corner; and the fair

hand of a mistress, if the place were so fortunate and blessed, had decreed the immortality of "the huts" by innumerable personal offices. Inside were the endless ornaments and appliances that fitted every crevice of the antiquated apartments. Without were to be seen the creepers trained around the rude little windows; the geraniums and fuchsias, the jessamine and verbena, that had gradually been marshalled in a pleasing array before the rustic veranda; and at a step beyond was the delightful little underground dairy, from whence, with each returning morn, came the sweetest butter and the richest cream. All this bundle of associations acquired, like the rolling snowball, irresistible power with the march of time, and opposed a formidable barrier of rural beauty to every temptation of prosperity or example that suggested a more fashionable display.

The homestead, then, with successive additions and enlargements, came at length to have much the appearance of a small village or an irregular street. A friend in the squatting line, who had a considerable clachan of this sort, felt his importance once somewhat flattered by the mistake of several travellers, who inquired of his bullock-driver, his shepherd, or his hut-keeper (idlers about town as they must have been mistaken for), what street they had got into, and whereabouts was the inn.

These edifices are generally built of slabs, of a kind of timber that splits readily, and is abundant throughout the country. Besides the proprietor's residence, they consist of the dwellings of the servants at the homesteads, the store-room, the dairy, the stable, sheds, and so forth, each structure individually having a very unpretending appearance, although imposing from a distance in the general effect. This is particularly the case when seen from afar through the open forest, or upon the verdant grassy slopes, where, without any *arrière pensée* of an equivocal quotation, " 'tis distance lends enchantment to the view."

Upon any considerable station the homestead is not by any means the only establishment, if one may use this term. There are, besides, what are called "Out-stations," which form the centres of sub-divisions of the run, and to which a flock of sheep is attached, under the care of a shepherd and hut-keeper. The former tends the sheep during the day, the latter attends to the cooking department —generally a very simple and monotonous vocation, and also shifts the hurdles for the camping-ground of the sheep during the night. This last is an important duty. It should be done daily, and with judgment as to the ground, which should be of a dry description, with a slight incline of the surface. Moisture under foot, and particularly

that from rich earth, is very unfavourable, and engenders or promotes the footrot,—an obstinate and destructive malady among sheep. The quarters forming the out-station consist usually of a small slab hut, possessing at most two, but sometimes only one apartment. Occasionally, however, upon very extensive stations, the accommodations are superior, and comprise a kind of secondary homestead under responsible management, having attached to it several out-stations.

As economy of management increased, the flocks at the different stations and out-stations, under the charge of one shepherd, were gradually extended in numbers in order to save the expense of wages. In the earlier times of Port Phillip squatting, when sheep were selling at £2 each, it was thought enough to have only about 500 of these valuable commodities under one charge; but at present it is not uncommon to find two or three thousand. This economy can be practised, however, only in an open country, where the sheep can find sufficient food without straying from one another. They are not naturally addicted to this inconvenient habit; but where a run consists mainly of forest land, somewhat thick of timber and in proportion bare of grass, such large flocks could not be kept together, and this economical management could not therefore be carried out. Hence one

principal cause of the great differences in the value of sheep-runs that are perhaps adjacent to one another, and similar as to some other advantages. Another mode of economizing is by making an out-station the centre for two different flocks, each having its shepherd, but with only one hut-keeper for the double establishment. The sheep at these out-stations are benefited by an occasional exchange of pasturage; and it is always an advantage to prevent the grass from being too closely cropped, and to make arrangements to permit of its duly recovering its growth.

If squatting life was monotonous even at the homesteads, where, with a dozen servants of one kind or other, and no infrequent arrival of visiters, a considerable society was made up,—where the master enjoyed, through some neighbouring post, his regular news "from town,"—and where the bullock-driver enlivened the kitchen with endless yarns about his last down-country excursion with the season's wool-clip; if all this, as I have said, proved at the best but a sorry apology for the world, what was life at the out-station? For months together the shepherd and his comrade hut-keeper might be left undisturbed by any even the slightest news of the external world, or even by a human countenance beyond that of the master or general overseer, who, once or twice a-week, or oftener if need

be, might be seen galloping across the intermediate space of five, ten, even fifteen miles, that separated the out-station extremities from the homestead. This kind of situation, however, was not unfavourable in some cases; for example, in that of a destitute married couple, having perhaps a small family, and who, on arrival in the colony, might find it impossible to drop at once into anything else. After a few years of service, such a party might easily save one hundred pounds, and, with a small back-bone of this sort, commence a more cheerful vocation.

I have already alluded to the subject of the great extent of squatting runs; but the English reader, accustomed, perhaps, to set a high value upon some small number of paternal acres, may still be surprised to learn the extent of surface, even of the rich soil of Victoria, that it is necessary to devote to the sustenance of a single sheep. During the first five years of the settlement, it was commonly asserted that at least three acres, even of good average land of the Port Phillip district, were necessary for the support of each sheep of a flock throughout the year. During the next five years there was a disposition to concede the sufficiency of two acres of such land for this purpose. I doubt if, even now, the squatters are disposed to admit that this estimate will allow of much reduction. But some

tracts of country of superior exuberance of vegetation have been made to support safely a larger proportion; such, for example, as localities like Colac and other pasturage to the westward and north-westward of Geelong. One station in the latter locality was described to me as containing 16,000 sheep upon 13,000 acres of land. The practice in this particular case was to sell off 4000 sheep annually, the quantity thus fluctuating between 12,000 and 16,000; and most probably the run was relieved in this manner towards the beginning or middle of summer, when the conjoint effect of heat and drought had suspended the growth of the grass, and occasioned a rapid reduction of the supply of food.

The squatting principle has been characteristically that of the *laissez faire.* Nature was the squatter's plough and harrow, his spade and pick throughout his vast estate. He drove his sheep to the ready-made grass, and at each recurring season he applied the shears to the ready-made wool. Nevertheless, in various particulars of management, the results of squatting were as dependent on ability and experience as those of any other colonial vocation. Some of the earlier settlers, no doubt, who had been fortunate in acquiring the largest and best runs, were placed under such favourable circumstances that they could scarcely help their success—they

had prosperity thrust upon them. But this could not be called a general condition, particularly for this reason, that squatting was a vocation in very general favour, which every one deemed himself fitted for, or which at least every class indiscriminately adventured on, and it was therefore carried on with every diversity of ability, industry, and economy. Here was a noble field for those who excelled most in these qualities; but as amongst other parties in this vocation, antagonistic qualities were also at work, the result proved as might have been expected. Although success was the rule, it was very various in degree, and there were many who failed in spite of the best prospects.

At the same time, the great number of cases of individual success warrant me in saying that squatting has proved in Victoria an eminently successful vocation. But it must not be supposed that the same opening exists now that was available some few years ago in this business. The main cause* of the prosperity of squatting was the facility of acquiring large tracts of land at merely nominal charges. This advantage now remains only to the early settler who is in actual possession. A newly arrived colonist, who contemplated turning his at-

* The squatter rightly claims that one cause of his well-doing was the absence of any personal extravagance. With comparatively few exceptions, the entire body lived in the plainest style.

tention to squatting, would find the market abundantly supplied with sheep and cattle of all kinds—ewes, young and old; fat wethers; "mixed flocks," including every sort, age, and sex; all or any of which he might buy on very favourable terms, feeling highly satisfied with his prospects as he reckoned up the net profits upon the wool and the increase, after deducting the expenses. But where is he to place the stock? A mixed flock of 10,000 good sheep "without station" may be offered him for 10s. per head all round; but if he prefer a more suitable offer, where "an admirable well-watered station" with a similar mixed flock of 10,000 sheep is advertised for sale, he will probably find that if the station really answers this description, the price demanded for the sheep has advanced from 10s. to 20s. per head, the difference of £5000 being in fact the premium upon the station.

Latterly this has proved no uncommon rate of premium among the many fine pastoral stations of Victoria that are ever changing hands. This premium it must be observed, however, includes "Improvements," by which term is comprehended the homestead, wool-sheds, fenced paddocks in grass or for cultivation, and any other useful objects for which labour or capital has been expended upon the run. The improvements on some of the older and more extensive stations, comprising the addi-

tions and extensions of every succeeding year, have now amounted to a very considerable value, and they secure great social comfort as well as business facilities to the purchaser of such runs; but their value, as compared with and distinguished from that of the run itself, is generally quite fractional. Stations situated even in the remoter parts of the colony, capable of depasturing 8000 sheep, on which an annual license-fee of £20* would be payable to the government, would now command a premium of more than a thousand pounds, although no improvements whatever had been effected.

The reputed prosperity of squatting pursuits is therefore not now generally applicable to Victoria as formerly. By the natural competition of capital and of persons seeking this pursuit, these advantages of location have been well ascertained and their price fixed. There is still the usual wide field for intelligence and enterprise that must always exist in so prosperous a colony; but, as regards the new comer, there is now no particular advantage in squatting pursuits over any others. In fact, the great proportion of the squatting body of Victoria consists now, not of the original settlers, but of those who have purchased from them, and who have paid the capital, as it were, of those privileges and

* The assessment charged on the live stock was lately taken off by the local legislature; so that the license-fee is now the only special charge on the squatter.

advantages that may still appear to enhance their incomes. Hence we have one cause, and not an unreasonable one, of the pertinacity with which many of the squatting body are now disposed to cling to every letter of their permissions, privileges, or legal rights. But we are now once more upon the threshold of the contentious squatting question, with reference to the great changes involved by the Orders in Council lately alluded to; and this time we must enter for a short space into the nature and merits of these ordinances.

The Port Phillip government, alarmed perhaps at the sweeping character of the changes indicated by these Orders, for a country so rapidly increasing in population, and whose lands were already so promising and valuable, hastened, by a great extension in the number of counties within the time prescribed, to exempt, from the operation at least of the fourteen years' lease, the greater part of the fine and available land of the interior. Three counties had been originally constituted—Bourke, Grant, and Normanby, which surrounded respectively the towns of Melbourne, Geelong, and Portland; to these twenty-one more were now added, comprising altogether above one-half of the entire area of the territory, and embodying the great proportion of the available lands. But a vast extent of land of every quality still remained to the Un-

settled district; while only the Settled portion, a comparatively small part of the country, was preserved to the public from the privilege of preemptive right. This grievous inadvertency of remote legislation exposed the colony to the loss of very large amounts, through a system of invidious distinctions, which gave to the squatter the option of every advantage, whether of mistake, uncertainty, or favouritism, in the valuation of the lands.

In the Sydney district the resistance to the Orders in Council proved immaterial as compared with what has been experienced in Victoria, and these Orders are there, I believe, being duly carried out. For these different results there were obvious reasons in both cases. In New South Wales the interspersed areas of unalienated lands were either too sterile or too remote to be the subject of much contention, and the vast extent of lands beyond the boundaries might be generally described to the same effect. In Victoria, on the other hand, the country in nearly every direction was beautiful, fertile, and available for man; and the land-sales had been only commenced, the quantity hitherto sold being less than the eightieth part of the territory.* The further acquisition of land

* The area of the colony is about 93,000 square miles, or 60,000,000 of acres. Up to 20th May 1853, there had been sold from the first to the public 640,047 acres, and under the recent pre-emptive arrangements 86,855 acres, making a total of 726,902 acres.

throughout a great part of the colony therefore was henceforth to assume the aspect of an incessant battle with parties in actual possession, who either set their disturbers at defiance by pre-emptive ingenuities, or challenged them to prove any adequate public necessity for the interference with their rights, in the ungracious task of destroying a vocation that had been the mainspring of the colony.

A spirit and tendency of this kind was indeed what might have been expected from the first. It was the only disadvantage that loomed out through the future, in connexion with the squatting system. Great as appeared at first the boon of occupying almost gratuitously these available lands, and reasonable as every intending occupant must have then considered it to be to recede, whenever required, from lands held on such terms; yet the effect of mere custom,—the kind of right appertaining to undisturbed occupancy for a number of years, the crown being landlord,—and the probable banding together of the whole body in mutual self-defence of their position, must have suggested a different picture as regarded the future. The realities of the picture in fact soon began to exceed any anticipations, owing to the respectability and influence of the squatting class, the importance of their vocation, particularly in the earlier stages

of the colony, and the wealth which many of their number had acquired in its pursuit.

These natural difficulties of the case have now been inconveniently enhanced by the appearance of the Orders in Council. The tendency of these orders has since been to give the effect of rights in cases where the great difficulty already was to prevent a sense of such rights from naturally arising by mere force of circumstances and the lapse of time. Every step of progress assumes now more than ever the aspect of an encroachment upon some squatter, and raises up feelings accordingly. We might ask, for example, what will be the practical position of a body of influential men, who, in their own person or that of their posterity, have occupied Crown Lands continuously for a period of twenty-eight years? The strict letter of law, one might almost fancy, would, in its application to this serried band, be apt to lapse into a mere curiosity of inquiry. These orders also were issued at a time when returning prosperity had already placed the interest they referred to in a position of general independence. Conferring invidious privileges and needless benefits, they have far overshot the real wants of the case; and the subsequent discovery of the gold-fields has added tenfold to their disadvantages.

These discoveries could not of course have been

foreseen; but the effects are not the less unfortunate. The gold-fields appear characteristically to prefer as their choicest sites the remote localities of the Unsettled district; and the Home Government is now in the position of having laboured assiduously to alienate a noble inheritance from the British crown and the multitudes of its emigrating people, while at the same time it has done its best, by a bait irresistible to human nature, to convert an enterprising and useful body of colonists into an unpopular and grasping confederacy.

The local government of Victoria, apparently after a long hesitation, which has not in any way amended the matter, lately decided to refer the Orders in Council, as regarded their application to that colony, once more to the Home Government. A provisional arrangement is for the present acted upon. Each squatter is permitted to purchase, usually at the rate of 20s. per acre, the square mile or some smaller portion of land on which he has erected his improvements; while the stringent regulations imposed regarding the stations of the Settled districts are not literally acted upon. Meantime, however, a sharp antagonism is rapidly arising between two classes of the colonists—the diminishing proportion of the squatters, and the increasing multitude of the other interests that is now overspreading the colony. It seems neither difficult nor yet

too late to adopt some equitable system that will dispense with these now injurious and obnoxious regulations, suppress a dangerous agitation in colonial society, and restore to the wonted good-fellowship a class of colonists so intimately associated with the early fortunes of Victoria, many of whose members, it is only justice to remark, never either desired or sought for the unnecessary, unpopular, and invidious privileges conferred by these measures.

This question is now one of legal rights, however injudiciously these may be alleged to have been conferred. Nor can any one doubt the intention of Parliament and of the Orders in Council, that leases *not exceeding* fourteen years, for instance, do here mean, and have always meant in such modes of speech, leases *of* fourteen years. It is equally obvious, and is explained at some pains, that lands in Unsettled districts could not be sold during a lease except to lessees. This is therefore a question of compensatory adjustment under circumstances of the colony which appear to me to dictate, that any arrangement whatever with the expectant lessees of the Crown Lands, is preferable to that of now carrying out in all their integrity these Orders in Council.

But, in fact, this question of compensation involves far less serious expense or difficulty than

might be imagined. Two chief evils appear to me, the abolition of which is not encumbered with the compensation question: 1. The political and social inequalities that might have arisen out of long and exclusive leases of large properties in a rapidly advancing colony, conferred by the crown at a nominal charge upon an influential body of colonists. 2. The liability of government to dispose of land under pre-emptive right at a mistaken value. In the present state of the colony it may be considered next to impossible to divine beforehand what would have proved the current value, if the lands had been thrown, in the usual way, into the market for sale by auction. The most extraordinary misconceptions in this respect are reported; and where the gold-diggings have now rendered the interior, even the remotest localities, alive in many parts with traffic and population, the high prices even of town or suburban allotments are sometimes realized for lands in the Unsettled districts which the valuators under Orders in Council, might have deemed sufficiently high to a purchasing squatter at the lowest price he was permitted to buy at, namely, 20s. per acre. Such parties might thus be alienating large tracts at the rate of £1 per acre, at the same time that the body of the public, exposed to the usual competition of public sales, were paying £5 or even £50 per acre in this locality. The

illustration is perhaps extreme, but yet one not in the least unlikely to occur.*

Now no compensation can be claimed for adopting some mode of averting an incidental liability to error of this description. The object intended to have been attained—namely, the protection and encouragement of the squatter in his improvements—must simply be attained after some less objectionable plan. The Imperial views could not have intended that any advantage should arise from mistakes of this kind; and as intentions are required and conceded in one part of this case, so should they be in all. Compensation therefore appears to me to be resolved into a question chiefly, if not solely, with the Unsettled districts, as regards the annual value in the market for the remaining term of the lease, in the case of any portion of a run required by the government from the squatter for public sale to the colonists. As the squatter has

* The case has in reality repeatedly occurred, and been the occasion of great offence among the public. A portion of the lots advertised in land sales has been withdrawn, under an intimation made as late even as the very day of the public sale, these lots having been assigned under pre-emptive claim to the squatter whose run had comprised the lands in question. There have also been allowances of large tracts of "homestead lands" at the upset price, in locations of known higher value, such as the vicinity of gold-fields—a procedure the more injudicious from the difficulty experienced at the time by thousands of colonists in procuring land either in these places or anywhere else at many times this price.

no power either to sub-lease or to cultivate for the market, and his tenure, therefore, is solely for pastoral purposes, the compensation in any case can never be serious—never for a moment to be balanced against the repeal of these regulations.

In getting rid of the Orders in Council, we shall probably have avoided some future evils of a political and social character as well as those more immediately visible. There is a tendency in these regulations, as already hinted, more particularly in the effect of the pre-emptive rights, to establish a privileged class in a community sensitively alive to such inflictions, and who would never fail to remember that the advantages in question were the result neither of personal merit nor of ancient institutions, but of the accidents or more properly the errors of very recent legislation.

But we shall certainly have avoided another evil; one that from habit and association is less apt to strike us now than will prove the case at a further stage of colonial progress. I allude to the tendency in the Orders in Council to force up by prestige, and I had almost said by compulsion, the present squatting system.

The time of the discovery of the gold-fields forms the culminating point in the ascendant career of the squatting interest. At the period of this eventful discovery the squatting body consisted of upwards

of one thousand licensees* of the Crown Lands, having under them 20,000 dependants, and comprising altogether about one-fourth of the colonial population. The live stock of this important interest, commenced in 1835-6 by the importation of some small flocks and herds, was now reckoned at 30,000 horses, 400,000 head of horned cattle, and upwards of 6,000,000 of sheep. But, while the population of Victoria has since increased threefold, it may be doubted if the population and quantity of stock pertaining to the pastoral body would at this moment equal even their former extent, owing to the expense and difficulties that now attend the vocation—a vocation, however, that, although troublesome, still happily continues prosperous, in consequence of the advanced prices of the live stock.

Under the prospects of Victoria the day of squatting cannot be expected to endure much longer in the present form. I speak with reference of course to the more available of the Colonial Lands, because there are extensive tracts even in Victoria that for generations to come will never be useful for any other purpose. The present inpouring torrent of population must gradually render more rare the silent and almost desolate spectacle hitherto enjoyed or endured by the squatter, as, from the threshold of his solitary homestead, he gazed on a

* I speak from recollection, but think the number nearly accurate.

horizon of universal verdure, occupied only by his own household and a few flocks of sheep. A system like this, which gives to nature so little aid from human science and industry, will soon fall short of the requirements of the country. The earlier advantages of squatting, when the Crown Lands were not otherwise required, and when nothing else could have been made of them, must not blind us by any indolent habit of thought to its deficiencies now.

At the present rate of progress in Victoria, what may be her population and what the diversified vocations of her people only ten years hence! Let us indulge for a moment the vision of a return of Yorkshire or Lancashire to the nomadic state; and, in place of millions of busy humanity, with their innumerable mechanisms and almost unlimited production, let us substitute a score or two of pastoral occupants, their annual cargo of wool, and their due proportions of sheep and cattle, of population and prosperity. The strains of eloquence might find even here some congenial ground in defending the present picture and the reigning order of things; but this inspiration could exist only under an oblivion of the past. In Victoria the pastoral picture of the present day has not indeed acquired its existence by the positive destruction of so elaborate a framework of society; but a negative pressure may be apt to operate, dis-

couraging by our prejudices or habits the preparatory steps and indications of these higher destinies.

But whatever betide our squatting vocations in Victoria, whether they be summarily doomed to the less kindly soils, in remote haunts and sterile patches of the colony, or maintain a protracted existence throughout many other parts, lingering as a pleasing scenic variety to the dust and noise of a busier world, they will ever call up a host of pleasing reminiscences, long, as we may hope, after the antagonisms occasioned by Orders in Council have been forgotten. The simplicity of life and manners, the open door, the ready hospitality of the earlier years—features that can characterize only a scattered or pastoral population—will recur hereafter to many an aged colonist like the vision of a delightful picture in the recollections of younger days. Some Australian Diogenes, some squatting Rousseau, still lingering in the cherished bush, may possibly challenge, in future years, the boasted progress of his day. As he then compares the more crowded hives of humanity around him, in all the chequered scenery of wealth and poverty attending a great and busy people, he may allowably indulge in a sigh over the past, and deplore that the progress of his country has certainly destroyed all that pleasing primitive condition which was once to many of the colonists the proverbial pleasure of Australian life.

CHAPTER V.

THE GOLD DISCOVERIES.

First Discovery in New South Wales by Hargreaves—A Hundredweight of Gold found—Excitement and Speculation in Sydney—Difficulties and Reaction—Prospecting in Victoria—Ballarat Diggings—The Blue Clay—Great Sensation—Increased by Discoveries at Mount Alexander—Gold arrives by the Ton Weight—Immigration from all Parts into Victoria—Bendigo Diggings—Difficult Communications in Winter—Incredible Rates of Carriage—Railway Projects—Extraordinary Progress of the Colony—Commercial Supremacy of Melbourne—Social Drawbacks and Discomfort—Convict Importations from Van Diemen's Land—Prevalence of Crime—Expense of Living—Increase to Public Salaries—Difficulties to Shipping—Reactionary Ameliorations.

The separation of the Port Phillip district from the colony of New South Wales, and its erection into an independent government under the name of Victoria,—an event to which I have already transiently alluded,—took place on the 1st of July 1851. While the new government was being inaugurated at Melbourne, and the colonists were rejoicing over their newly acquired independence, the colony was daily searched by many eyes eager to discover the existence of gold. New South Wales was then in a state of great excitement from the recent dis-

covery within her boundaries of available gold-fields, whose existence had been made known to the public about six weeks previously.

This momentous discovery was effected by Mr Edward Hammond Hargreaves, a New South Wales colonist, after his return from a visit to California. He was struck by the resemblance of a part of the country near Bathurst to some localities of the Californian gold-fields. In fact, from mere recollection of the Bathurst neighbourhood, with whose features he had been early familiar, he apprehended the discovery of gold in that locality even before he had left California, and he accordingly addressed some friends in Sydney upon the subject, urging them to make an attempt to ascertain the truth of his conjectures. But these movements produced no effect whatever, and even after his return to Sydney, he found it a difficult matter to induce either the government or private colonists to give him any consideration or credence.

At length, however, upon an understanding with the authorities, who had promised him some allowance and other remuneration in the event of success, he started for Bathurst on his explorations. He took with him merely a tin dish and some apparatus for scraping together a little earth or gravel. The locality which his Californian experience led him to select was the lower extremity of the Sum-

merhill Creek, where it joins Lewis's Ponds. Filling his dish with some earth, and washing after the primitive fashion still in vogue in Australia, the first experiment gave gold, and further trials completely proved his expectations.

This occurrence took place on the 12th February 1851,—a memorable day in the history of Australia. The government were now quite satisfied, and after some further delay, the matter was allowed to transpire to the public towards the middle of May. At the festive boards of his fellow-colonists, the discoverer has allowably expatiated on his feelings in this proud moment of victory, and of a discovery of unparalleled consequence. But while he jocularly alluded to the vision of Baron Hargreaves that had momentarily floated before him in the future, one must regret that a far more useful and substantial acknowledgment was not made to him out of colonial revenues which his discovery had enhanced tenfold, and by colonies which, to use a common phrase of the day, had thus been precipitated into nations, and rendered at once the most interesting and important of the British dependencies.*

* It seems unaccountable that the legislatures both of New South Wales and Victoria should have refused to sanction to Mr Hargreaves any grant of public money, although his circumstances required such assistance. Surprise and disappointment are greatest as regards Victoria, which has so enormously benefited by the discovery. The ob-

The discovery of the New South Wales gold-fields, and the probability of their great extent, occasioned for a time the liveliest excitement in that colony,—a feeling that was still further increased by the discovery in July of nearly a hundredweight of pure gold lying together in one place. This remarkable discovery was made on the sheep-station of Dr Kerr of Wallawa, about fifty miles beyond Bathurst, by an aboriginal shepherd while tending his flock. The gold was diffused in several tangled fragments through a small mass of quartz, weighing scarcely two hundredweight, in addition to the weight of the precious metal; and the whole lay among the surface soil, partly exposed above the ground. In these times every one had commenced to look well at the soil he trod under his feet, having a full faith in the possibility of great discoveries at every step; and in this case at least the practice was justified. Unfortunately this rare and dazzling specimen was broken into several pieces in order to facilitate its removal. It was subsequently sold for £4000, and the aboriginal discoverer was rewarded by the donation of a flock of sheep.

servations of some of the members of both legislatures were so harsh, as to occasion a reaction in Hargreaves' favour out of doors, which resulted in considerable sums being raised by private subscription to reward and assist him. It was understood that he was desirous of returning to England, with the view of visiting various European gold-washings, but that he had not the necessary means.

The spirit of excitement centred chiefly in Sydney, a locality that has always, even in ordinary times, been sufficiently characterized by speculative enterprise. A scramble commenced for the principal articles of merchandise, and the market was cleared by speculating merchants and dealers, of all that was offering in the way of flour, beer, and spirits. Outfits for the diggings appeared in every street, and were the subject of a long range of advertisements in the local journals. The Bathurst road was crowded with passengers travelling after every fashion towards the west, as many as 2000 persons having been estimated as on the way at one time. The fares by the vehicles were enormously advanced, and the rate of inland carriage between Sydney and Bathurst rose from £2, 10s. to as high as £30 per ton. For some time distress and embarrassment pervaded the capital and some other parts of the colony. Hired servants deserted, labourers and artisans of all kinds felt the prevailing mania, and watched the first chance to try their fortune or gratify their curiosity; and so general was the movement, that there were estimated to be at one time in Sydney not less than five hundred females left destitute by their husbands in the hasty flight to the diggings.

This fever, however, soon sensibly abated. The localities were very remote, and the season of mid

winter which had rapidly overtaken the sanguine diggers, brought many inconveniences and sufferings. There was no natural fodder for the numerous beasts of burden, and all provisions were excessively dear. The precaution of bringing tents and other baggage had not been general, and many were therefore compelled to stretch their weary limbs for the night under the canopy of a wintry heaven. The gold itself, the cause of all the disturbance, could not certainly be described as scarce and hard to procure; but the motley legion that groped for it was, in that early stage of proceedings, quite inadequately equipped for its business, few having brought any effective apparatus, and many possessing only a spade or shovel, a pick or tomahawk, or some such imperfect means of conducting their vocation.

A decided reaction took place. Numbers still pressed onwards through hope or curiosity; but they were met by a counter-stream of wearied and disappointed diggers returning to their homes and former employments. The speculative spirit gave way, and merchandise returned to its old rates. The gold-fields in New South Wales have since been indicated throughout an extensive region, and diggings are now in operation in about a dozen different localities. The rewards are not inconsiderable, and they appear to be somewhat

certain; but the enthusiasm of the first outbreak has never returned, and for some time past the diggers have maintained a somewhat stationary population of about 6000 persons.

In the meantime, great efforts were being made in Victoria, both from patriotic sentiments and from motives of a more personal character, to discover gold-fields in that colony. Considerable numbers began to ruminate upon a journey to the adjacent colony. Parties of three or half-a-dozen individuals appeared, few at first, but gradually increasing, upon the great Sydney road travelling northward, and the number of passengers outwards by the colonial traders sensibly augmented. While some denounced the gold-fields as a misfortune—and hitherto perhaps they had brought nothing but disarrangement and unrequited preliminary expenses—all agreed in this view, that, since they existed in Australia, Victoria had better have some of her own, so as to retain her population and commerce. A public meeting was therefore convened in Melbourne to consider the subject, and after an animated discussion, before an unusually large and attentive audience, a sum of two hundred guineas was subscribed for, and promised to the discoverer of an available gold-field situated within the boundary of Victoria. Claimants soon appeared, with claims old and new. It was now surprising how

many were aware long before of the existence of gold. But there had been in fact a kind of desultory search for gold in Victoria ever since the Californian discoveries. In 1849, rumours were very general of the discovery of this metal near the Pyrenees; and as the same locality has since proved to be a gold-district, it is not improbable that a discovery of some solitary fragments had there actually taken place. To this day, however, the reward in question has never been adjudged to any one.

Hargreaves' discovery had now defeated all scepticism and ridicule. As time rolled on, faith sensibly increased, and many active limbs were zealously perambulating different parts of Victoria. Rumours of success came down from various creeks and vales. Patriotism, in its effort to check the emigration, enlarged its ears, to hope the best from every tale; and some "pious frauds" are reported, that were not quite relished by those whose purpose of emigration they had delayed or frustrated. One of the most celebrated of the illusory gold-fields was the valley of the river Plenty. Upwards of two hundred persons were toiling along the Plenty road, or "prospecting" over the forest-clad hills and ravines of this locality, to return with empty pockets and weary limbs, and perhaps with so good an insight into digging life, as to save

many of them the trouble of repeating the experiment.

The first gold-field of any veritable character was that at Anderson's Creek, seventeen miles to the westward of Melbourne. Several hundred persons were here at work during August and September, and small quantities of undoubted Victoria gold appeared in the Melbourne market from this locality, which at that early stage, with so stinted a supply, brought the comparatively high price of 67s. per ounce. The first important gold-field of Victoria was Ballarat, which became known as such during September. In October, a large concourse of people was assembled here. During the same month the gold-fields around Mount Alexander became known, and they have since acquired for the colony extraordinary celebrity. The discovery of the Bendigo diggings followed, and these have proved even more productive. Then came Mount Korong and several less important discoveries, and, finally, the promising gold-field of the river Ovens, near Wangaratta, on the main road to Sydney, and not far removed from the boundary between the two colonies. This last locality appears more important than the others, not only from the probable extent of its gold-fields, but from its yielding also a rich ore of tin, which has been met with in large quantities. The amount of gold yielded by these

different localities in Victoria, from September 1851 when the Ballarat diggings were in operation, to the end of the following year, has been estimated at upwards of four millions six hundred thousand ounces—an incredible production, and altogether unexampled even in California, when the rude appliances are considered, and the short noviciate of the colony in the art of gold-digging.

Important events followed speedily upon the discovery of the Victoria gold-fields. Towards the end of September, the accounts from Ballarat created a great excitement in Melbourne and Geelong. Washing and searching there among the surface gravel had at first satisfied the diggers. But many at length began to vie with each other in penetrating deeper into the bowels of this mysterious and productive earth; and the "pipe clay," a formation apparently always subjacent to the auriferous gravel, was more or less bored in every part of the grounds. This formation, which, like the chalk and older limestones in the northern hemisphere, appears extensively to pervade the country, is in structure of a soft shaly character, and is usually of a white or satin hue, but occasionally also lightly tinged with a blue, yellow, or other colour. A bluish gray hue prevailed at Ballarat, and hence the denomination of the "blue clay," whose celebrity is not yet forgotten. The bed of this substance is

much thrown out of its original horizontal stratification, and in the many interlaminar furrows and crevices on the upper surface where it joins the superincumbent gravel, deposits or "pockets" of gold were frequently met with. "Veins," as they were called by the diggers, were also struck, at short depths of from one to three feet, into the clay. These veins consisted of irregular chains of small fragments of gold, whose direction was extremely uncertain, but which yielded considerable quantities of gold to those who were so fortunate as to meet with them.

Intelligence now reached Melbourne that the diggers were picking out these veins in the blue clay, armed only with a penknife and their naked eyes. These representations, which, although exaggerated, were in some respects true, caused the town to be well nigh deserted. The beginning of October was the real commencement of those difficulties to other interests and vocations in the colony that have been ever since occasioned by the gold-diggings. The desertion of homes and employments, the ranges of desolate empty houses, the falling off in business, and the sudden cessation of demand for property of all kinds, began to infect the minds of the colonists with a kind of panic. Strange as it may appear, the very abundance of gold in the country thus occasioned for a time a

fall in prices, and houses and lands were disposed of in some instances at a reduction of 20 per cent., to be soon however resold by their fortunate purchasers at an advance of 500 or 1000 per cent.

Emigration to the Sydney side had now not only ceased, but a tide had begun to set into Victoria, both from Sydney and the other adjacent ports. The accounts from Ballarat, however, had not been very effective in stimulating this immigration. It was not until November and December following, when Mount Alexander shone forth with its sudden celebrity, that the inpouring torrent became remarkable. The weekly escort-quantities from Ballarat had never risen to 3000 ounces, although it was generally understood that much larger quantities arrived in town by private hands. In the middle of November, however, between six and seven thousand ounces arrived by the Mount Alexander escort. The following week the quantity had risen to 10,600, and for the second week of December it was 23,650 ounces, or upwards of one ton in weight. The reports of such extraordinary fortunes now emanating from the colony, occasioned a rapid influx of population. In January, 7500 persons arrived at Melbourne, and from that time until September the numbers averaged between 5000 and 6000 monthly. In September, a great augmentation took place by the addition of the stream from Britain, which then

began to set in. The number for that month was nearly 16,000, and for October above 19,000. One or two thousand persons sometimes arrived within a single day. During the entire year there arrived 105,000 persons, from whom however there is to be deducted the considerable proportion of 27,000 who had re-emigrated. These latter consisted to a great extent of diggers returning to the adjacent colonies with the results of their varied fortunes, including perhaps many passengers originally destined for other ports, no inconsiderable number of disappointed emigrants quitting the country after a brief trial, and colonists returning, after various periods of absence, to visit once again their native land.

The reader has been already apprized that, notwithstanding the proverbial dryness of an Australian climate, there is a prolonged winter season of wet and cold in Victoria. The busy diggers for six months after their crowning discoveries at Mount Alexander, during the dry season of summer and autumn, tripped lightly to and fro in streaming thousands, with their multifarious vehicles, upon the great and dusty highway between the capital and the golden Mount. But as winter made his grim approach, threatening flooded rivers and impassable roads, serious fears began to be entertained regarding the supply of necessaries for the remote and isolated hosts of human beings at the gold-fields,

who were now estimated to comprise, including all parties on the road and upon the grounds, nearly one-half of the entire colonial population.

The government seemed to have been suddenly oppressed with its many cares, and to be unused to the great emergencies that had arisen. Month after month of the precious summer was permitted to pass away without any improvement being effected on the line of road, many of whose vexatious gullies, creek-crossings, and patches of swamp, might at all events have been greatly improved by an outlay, considerable perhaps, but certainly not more than the increased means of the colony could have well spared for so important an object. Something that was at length tardily accomplished in this way was too partial, and was done too late to be of much avail. Winter rolled on like an avalanche of mud over the country, and more than a thousand vehicles, whose drivers had hitherto consoled themselves under the difficulties of the creeks and crossings, by the facility with which they stepped over the hard surface of the plains, were forthwith involved in a mortal struggle, that sent forth from gross and excited passions alike the merciless lash and the torrent of vulgar execration which the cost of a thousand roads would never atone for.

Rates of carriage to Mount Alexander had generally ranged between £10 and £20 per ton. As

winter drew on, these rates began alarmingly to advance. The Bendigo gold-fields, about twenty-five miles north of the Mount, and one hundred miles from Melbourne, were at this time the great focus of attraction. To this locality, where it was said 40,000 persons were at one time assembled during the month of June, the rates of carriage rose successively to £80, £100, and £120 per ton, and contracts were said to have been freely made at still higher rates, even at £150 per ton. £3 to £4 per week, with rations, were promptly given to good bullock-drivers who were disposed to undertake the protracted and adventurous charge of a provision dray. At the diggings, the course of prices had been already for some time on the upward move, in anticipation of the winter's scarcity. A tent full of stores was second only to a tent full of the gold itself. Flour which could be purchased in Melbourne at £24 per ton, was sold at Bendigo for £20 per bag of 200 lbs., or at the rate of £200 for the ton of 2000 lbs. weight. The privations thus occasioned were fatal at the time to the continued prosperity of Bendigo, and were doubtless instrumental in occasioning shortly after, even while the yield of gold continued undiminished, a reactionary tide and a rush to localities nearer town, where provisions and necessaries were more accessible.

According to the common saying, when things

are at the worst, they mend. In this instance they at least brought the prospect and promise of amendment. The ample earnings at the diggings had proved enough, and yet considerably to spare, to clear off the costs and charges of the winter. When the trials of this gloomy season had passed, when warm and smiling spring, by healing up the wounded roads, was rapidly mellowing the countenances of travelling diggers and carriers, people began to calculate deliberately the serious disadvantages they had laboured under, and to bethink themselves how they might remedy them.

It appeared scarcely credible, but not the less true, that during the six months of the past winter season, three quarters of a million sterling should have been paid for the mere carriage of the necessaries of life to the northern gold fields. This calculation excluded all fresh butchers' meat, which was supplied to the different diggings by the live flocks and herds that were driven to the grounds from the surrounding squatting stations. In ordinary times this amount would have proved sufficient for the construction of a railway throughout the entire line. With reference to so striking a fact and so desirable an object, it was estimated that the cost of a good ordinary macadamized road, under the altered circumstances of the country, could not be less than £5000 per mile, with the additional prospect of pro-

portionate expenses for maintaining it in repair. The increased cost of labour in the colony, it was considered, could not equally affect railways, whose materials were chiefly derived from external and less varying markets. The anticipated traffic, too, left no room to doubt the results as an investment; and as a step in progress towards the senior colony to the north, the contemplated line was eminently desirable on public considerations, as the Great Southern and Western Railway had already commenced in Sydney its march towards Victoria, even prior to the discovery of the Australian gold-fields.

Under these auspicious circumstances the scheme of the Melbourne, Mount Alexander, and Murray River Railway came before the public. It was eagerly supported, together with several other useful lines, with all necessary privileges by the legislature; and the government, by its effective support of the measure, compensated in some degree for previous deficiencies. But more winters must yet elapse ere the weary digger can exchange an uneasy tumbril, and a toilsome journey, involving days of precious time, for a seat in the Melbourne Express, and a few hours of refreshing travel, which an ounce or a pinch of the precious dust he has collected—an inappreciable abstraction from the general mass of his earnings—would so easily procure him.

Wonderful indeed were the results of the Victoria gold-fields upon the wealth and commerce of the colony. The public revenue rose from its amount of £380,000 in 1851, to £1,577,000 in 1852. In regard to trade and population, Melbourne, lately but the capital of Victoria, is already the chief city of Australia. The markets of the youngest colony now govern those of her surrounding seniors; and the estimate of her customs revenue for the present year 1853, under somewhat similar tariffs,* exceeds that of all these other colonies put together. The value of the exports of the colony for the year 1852, officially stated at about seven and a half millions sterling, is however found, upon a more accurate calculation, which allows for gold exported during that year without official record, to have amounted to nearly fourteen millions sterling,—an amount considerably greater than the yearly export of the produce of any other British colony, and amounting to one-fifth of the export of Britain itself on an average of several past years.

Meanwhile, this flattering position of the colony, this wealth, prosperity, and progress, so conspicuous on the surface, was not unaccompanied in some par-

* That of New South Wales is rather less favourable, those of Van Diemen's Land and South Australia rather more so, for revenue purposes than the Victoria tariff. The customs revenue of Victoria for the first quarter of 1853 was at the rate of £530,000 a-year. The increase of commerce is so rapid that the produce of the year may be taken at more, perhaps much more, than £600,000.

ticulars by very opposite conditions. The houses of the towns and suburbs, now crowded with population—for the empty mansions already alluded to were not suffered long to remain in that condition—were the occasion of much sickness. The successive multitudes of arriving colonists, pressing one upon another, and competing for some immediate vocation, exposed numbers to delay and disappointment, and induced many, unsuited by their habits and education, to betake themselves to severe bodily labour, under the temptation of the considerable current wages. Working upon the roads and streets for the enticing government pay of 10s. per day was a common vocation with all classes of new arrivals who were destitute of spare means. And here, accordingly, might be seen amongst the crowd the staid tradesman of past days, the gay young clerk, the ambitious merchant, all still full of faith in the future. The shrewd lawyer, wielding a pick by way of a temporary variety, would glance knowingly from the boundary it rudely marked out under his hand, to the adjacent allotments and their minute sub-divisions, and reflect with hope upon the endless conveyancing they must occasion. Even the sombre countenance of the young licentiate was there, with a wife and family perhaps dragging upon energies that were now exerted in a very unusual channel; but all still hoping happier days, and the future

care of more dignified objects. Some of this motley throng were proud that they could stoop to necessity and yet retain independence; while to others the chief point of comfort was the disguise of a cabbage-tree hat or a moleskin coat, from whence they were ready to emerge to the view of any inquiring friends on the first turn of fortune.

Until a recent period, when extensive barracks of wood and canvass were constructed by the joint aid of government and public subscription, great numbers of arriving immigrants were unable to obtain shelter, and suffered severely from exposure to the weather. Individual miseries, severe at least, if not numerous in a comparative sense, were experienced by these and other parties, as they strove to edge their way in a strange country, labouring under ill health, pecuniary distress, domestic cares, general disappointment, or the death or absence of friends and protectors. Old and young of each sex, and helpless females of every age, were jostled out of the impetuous tide of colonial life, to be lost, amidst the worst dangers, in nooks and corners of the expanding capital, whence many perhaps never emerged, at least to that honour and independence which they had fondly hoped for in so flourishing a colony.*

* I cannot too strongly impress upon all who have to do with emigration that every female proceeding to these parts should provide

Prior to the era of the gold-diggings, societies of benevolent ladies were accustomed to seek out and relieve this secluded world of mental and bodily distress. Passing here and there some noisy claimant for public charity, these fair labourers sought amidst noxious by-lanes the objects of more real sympathy, who, sunk perhaps from higher stations, and overwhelmed with shame and poverty, seemed still reluctant to emerge upon the world's observation. For these they procured employment, they administered counsel and encouragement, or they distributed pecuniary assistance from funds raised by voluntary contribution for the purpose. But when the era of the diggings commenced, with all its inequalities of fortune, with the accidents and miseries that skirted the edges of the bright golden stream; when miscellaneous crowds poured into the

herself with a note of special introduction to some respectable individual or family in the colony, or more properly at the seaport where she disembarks. This should be particularly attended to with young females, even although accompanied by near relations. Such a letter is a sure passport to instant attention and counsel, if not to employment. The most deplorable results may happen otherwise, in a place filled with an unsettled population and with multitudes of the worst characters. Ten years ago, when Mrs Chisholm commenced her philanthropic labours at Sydney with the "Emigrant's Home," hundreds of young women recently landed from emigrant ships were found wandering helplessly in the streets and public gardens. The exertions on the part both of the Government and the public at Melbourne of late have rendered less necessary than formerly the precaution I have alluded to; but it is one so beneficial under any circumstances, that it should always be attended to.

colony by hundreds and thousands daily; when the sphere of those duties had increased tenfold; in short, precisely when most required in these arduous duties, were these sisters of humanity compelled in a great measure to abandon their work. Charity must be permitted to begin at home; and when the new order of things had brought with it endless inconvenience and discomfort into the domestic circle—the want of servants, the enormous expenses of private life—a call of a more private and domestic character, gradually severed from their public duties many of these honoured wives and mothers of the colony.

Melbourne, from a small town, expanded suddenly into a city. Its streets swarmed with unshaven chins and negligent attire. Thousands of pockets that were once occupied only by some scant remnant of hard-earned wages, were now oppressed with masses of solid gold; and hundreds of public houses were filled with crowds venting execrations, and rioting in extravagance and folly. Robbery, outrage, and murder prevailed by day and night; and the penal settlement of the Empire, close at hand, poured forth into so inviting a territory a steady felon stream, as from the open portals of Sodom and Gomorrah. True to its calling, this penal importation revelled in a region of gold and freedom, and carried the infamous romance of bush-ranging

within the very boundaries of the capital. The police for the time were insufficient, inexperienced, and ineffective from continual desertion, and the want of arrangements suited to the sudden emergencies of the day.

Such is a view of some of the dark points of the general picture of Melbourne and of the colony, stirred up to unwonted conspicuousness in the first confusion of change. But a general brightness both of promise and reality still overspreads the scene. Many evils, at least in their grosser aspects and effects, may be expected to disappear in the gradual lapse of time, and habituation to the new condition of the colony.

The increase in the expense of living soon became one of the most conspicuous features among the effects of the gold discoveries. Melbourne, in 1852, might well claim the honour, the distinction of one kind at least, of being the most expensive place of residence in the world, California itself not excepted, although proverbial in this respect. Eight years previously, it presented merits of a precisely opposite character. In these earlier days, when a loaf of bread could have been bought for 4d., a leg of mutton for 6d., and a comfortable four-roomed cottage have been rented for £30 a-year, it was difficult to point out a country where such advantages were available at cheaper rates. But, in 1852,

the loaf had advanced to 2s., and the mutton to 6d. per lb. The comfortable cottage, if to be met with at all, was contentiously disputed for by a dozen applicants; and a tantalizing landlord had reconciled his conscience to a demand of £300 or £400 a-year. Servants' wages had advanced from £20 a-year to £50; some had the assurance to demand £100, many the intermediate gradations; and the quality of the labour was not uncommonly in an inverse ratio to the wages. The supply of a house with the indispensables of wood and water occasioned a frightful bill at the year's end, a load of the former having advanced from 5s. or 6s. to nearly as many pounds, and a cask of water out of the adjacent river from 1s. to 5s. The broad shoulders of a porter were now almost a priceless luxury for the transport of baggage; and the carter, with a summary bargain wherein the terms were generally his own, trimmed his fares between 6s. and 15s. for the various distances within the town. A cabriolet and pair might be hired for a day by a dexterous bargain for the trifle of half-a-dozen pounds; but this was a luxury in the indulgence of which few could compete with the diggers and other labourers. To those who had to maintain any position in society, a thousand a-year, which comprises so respectable an array of means elsewhere, left nothing to spare in a very unassuming style

of life in the city of Melbourne and the colony of Victoria.

These privations were tolerable to most of the colonists, because, being engaged in business, they experienced proportionate profits and prosperity. To those who were otherwise situated, who depended on fixed incomes not thus benefited by these circumstances, or only tardily and inadequately accorded to them, the scene was really one of an unmixed darkness and discouragement, which has proved the occasion of many respectable families and colonists betaking themselves to less expensive and more agreeable quarters elsewhere. The salaries in public and private offices were all increased, generally to double their previous rates. The legislative council recommended that the salary of the governor should be raised from £2000, as appointed by the Home Government, to £5000 per annum, and expressed their willingness to vote the addition out of the revenue. Other public salaries were treated with similar liberality; and the provision of the "Schedules," instituted by the Home Authorities, and now altogether inadequate to the case, was overridden and practically set aside, in the happy illustration of a needless and offensive precaution.

Some disadvantages, although less experienced by individual colonists, were not less unfavourable

to the colony. The shipping interest, in particular, suffered by the desertion of the crews and the delays and expenses attending the despatch of vessels. Port Phillip, like California, acquired an expensive celebrity for these inconveniences, which the colony, in some shape or other, has always ultimately to pay for. The dropping of the anchor of every arriving vessel was the usual signal for a war between the captain and his impatient crew, who must be forthwith ashore in order to proceed to the diggings, and who were often neither very nice in intimating their wishes, nor very long, in some fashion, of carrying them out. Entire crews, obstinate and refusing to work, were transferred to prison, to be again put on board when their ship was about to leave the port.

High words on such occasions came sometimes to blows, and ended in serious violence. One case which acquired celebrity was that of a vessel newly arrived at Geelong. The crew, on asking their discharge in order to proceed to the mines, were promised it after they had accomplished the delivery of the cargo. Not satisfied with this arrangement, they threatened to seize the boat; and the captain in his turn, arming himself with a pistol, declared he would shoot through the head the first man who advanced for that purpose. His threat being disregarded, the first person who came forward

was shot accordingly, and fell dead upon the deck. The captain was then seized, lashed to the wheel, and abused by the infuriated crew; and all as it appeared in the presence of a number of passengers, who had remained, strangely one would think, quiet spectators of the scene. The crew made off, but were subsequently caught and punished; and the captain received an acquittal for the commission of the grave deed which he considered his duty had required of him.

This state of things continued for some time, and an accumulation of one hundred three-masted vessels, many of them among the finest of British merchantmen, besides a still greater number of smaller craft, assembled at the port of Melbourne,* attested at once the rising magnitude of colonial commerce, and the expense and inconvenience to which it was subjected. But amelioration gradually appeared. Sailors, sick of the diggings, came flocking to their old haunts, and longing for their usual vocations. Jack, however skilled at ploughing the waters, made a very restless and indifferent digger of the land. This became so currently known, that judi-

* Some confusion is occasioned in bills of lading and other mercantile marine documents by this term, which may mean either Hobson's Bay and the small town of Williamstown, which constitute the seaport of Melbourne for the larger shipping, or it may of course also mean Melbourne itself, which is a seaport for small craft. In bills of lading, "the Port of Melbourne" is now usually held to mean Hobson's Bay, if the vessel is of too great draft to proceed further.

cious shipmasters, on good terms with their crews, would enter into agreements, that after discharging the cargo, the entire company, from the captain downwards, should proceed to the gold-fields, or in other instances that one-half should proceed there alternately. Although permitted to remain indefinitely amongst these supposed attractive scenes—a liberty in fact which it would have been useless to attempt to restrain—the entire party, even to a man, might be found again at duty within a fortnight. Convenient compromises were thus made, but subject in all instances to large advances of wages.

Crews were readily engaged, although at high rates, for inter-colonial voyages occupying brief intervals; but for many months it was exceedingly difficult, indeed next to impossible, to man the vessels destined for remoter localities, such as Europe, India, and even New Zealand. Serious and incessant difficulty was therefore experienced, both at Melbourne and Geelong, in despatching the numerous vessels that were charged with the gold and other valuable exports of the colony. The emergency must be met at any consequence, and the rates of pay rose proportionately. The home voyage had generally some attractions, particularly for the diggings' sick tars; and when none would offer himself upon any terms for China or India, parties came forward, slowly indeed and reluctantly as compared

with the demand, for the voyage to Britain. For a time, under these inauspicious circumstances, the rate of pay was as high as £60 and upwards to each seaman; and this was demanded to be paid down in gold upon the capstan before a hand would be put to the anchor-cable. The preparation for a departing ship was a scene of contest like a public auction. More than one vessel could seldom get away in the same day, or even within a wider compass of time. Captains, compelled to leave their ships and their golden cargoes, and often with a very slender guardianship, were beating up through the town day and night for seamen; and it was upon an occasion of this kind that a robbery took place of 8000 ounces of gold on board the ship Nelson, in Hobson's Bay, while lying at anchor ready in everything but her crew for departure for London.

Latterly, however, the supply of seamen has been greatly on the increase, and they are now easily obtainable in Melbourne at rates that, although still excessive, are gradually declining. These rates, during the first quarter of 1853, had settled down to about £45 per man for the homeward run, £40 for India and other equidistant localities, and at the rate of £8 or £10 per month for inter-colonial voyaging. Such local extremes naturally effect their own cure. So high and scanty a market will soon be better stocked; and already for some time past

seamen have been plentifully offering themselves in Britain for the Australian voyage at one shilling per day, and even at the nominal rate of one shilling for the outward run, in order that they might secure some of this golden harvest that attends the return voyage.

CHAPTER VI.

EFFECTS OF THE GOLD DISCOVERIES.

Difficulties of Van Diemen's Land—Convict Labour—The Transportation Question—Convict Outpourings into Victoria—Consequences—Two Illustrations—Convicts' Prevention Bill—Van Diemen's Land and New Zealand benefited by the Gold—Case of South Australia—Desertion of Population for Mount Alexander—Panic and Commercial Crisis—Legislative Interference with the Currency—The Gold Act discussed—Reasons for Disapproval—Sanctioned by Home Government — Effects of the Gold on Commerce generally—Supply and relative Value of Gold—Gold as Money—A Pound sterling—Comparison of past and present Supplies—Effects of the recent Supplies—Illustration drawn from other Metals—Slow advance in Price of Silver—Supply and Value compared with Gold—The Silver Currency replaced by Gold as latter falls in Value—Illustration by recent Increase of Gold Coinage—Effects of the Gold are thus graduated—Large Supplies of Silver from the Currencies—Gold and Silver both in course of Depreciation—Importance of the Question as to the future Depreciation of Gold—Question of a Change of Standard—Crisis this would involve—What are actually the pecuniary Contracts of Society—Case of the National Creditor—Good and Evil from the Gold—Preponderance of the former—Some Illustration of both.

THE effects of the gold discoveries proved in most respects equally inconvenient to the adjacent colonies as to Victoria, while at the same time these colonies could not be expected to derive equal advantages. New South Wales was fortunate in losing comparatively few of her population, who were

tolerably satisfied with their own gold-mines, and disposed to adhere somewhat steadily to old vocations, under the encouragement of a considerable advance of wages.

Very different, however, was the case in Van Diemen's Land. The emigration from that colony was sudden and excessive, and many of the farmers were all but totally deserted by their labourers. The perplexities of the colonists were still enhanced by the fiery ordeal which numbers of them imposed upon themselves of resisting the government offer of the British convicts at almost nominal rates of wages. Rejecting the convict, these parties could scarcely meet with the free labourer, who shunned alike the land of such associates, and the competition of such wages. The anti-convict league, although waging a triumphant war in the northern colonies, was here sadly depressed by the difficulties encountered by its supporters, and the annoying facilities enjoyed for the time by its pro-convict antagonists. It is scarcely necessary to say that Van Diemen's Land, like other countries, is peopled by frail humanity, and that the government boasted, perhaps with truth, that every prisoner available for private service was promptly taken off its hands by a demand that exceeded the supply.* These

* The English reader can scarcely conceive the antagonism that existed in Van Diemen's Land at this time in consequence of the convict

difficulties, more or less, have since continued among the colonists, but they have been well compensated by some solid advantages that quickly followed in their wake. An unlimited demand, at greatly advanced prices, arose in the Victoria markets for the timber and grain of the island; and the Tasmanian diggers were ever returning to their homes, after seasons of mining toil, carrying with them a large aggregate of gold, which soon very sensibly increased the wealth and prosperity of the country.

Vast numbers of the convict population of this penal colony flocked over to the gold-fields. The Expiree whose sentence was completed, the "Ticket of leave" who with certain indulgences still lingered under the law, the conditionally pardoned, namely,

question. Parties supporting the convict system repeatedly asserted, even in cool debate, that they preferred convicts to freemen; and the sharp chastisement administered promptly by the other side to such moral atrocities, was sure to call for rejoinders equally prompt in the same personal spirit. I myself was at this time on a visit to that colony. A vessel had arrived off Launceston from Calcutta, and next morning, while the eager merchants were expecting some profitable speculation in merchandise, they learned that the good ship had again departed, having touched with the view solely of landing some 15 or 20 criminals from the Indian possessions. Now was the opportunity for the leaguers. They deplored in terms furious or pathetic the fate of fair Tasmania, by nature the most magnificent, now sunk by men and governments to the most degraded of the earth's surface; of a truth "the dust-hole of the Empire," "the focus of the scum and dregs of all humanity." The case was one of awkward indignity to their antagonists, whose consolations were restricted to the advantage of a few additional servants.

on the convenient condition to the local authorities that he should quit the place to which the law had adjudged him, not however returning to the United Kingdom,—all these sped over by the various passenger-boats, accompanied by many hundreds of others who, not having received their liberty by law, contrived means to take it by force or stratagem. While many of this mixed society applied themselves creditably to the auriferous soil, and plied their sinewy hands with much success—for many were reputable and well-conducted colonists—a formidable proportion, with the old impulses still predominant, sought a more summary, although more dangerous road to fortune, by tracking and robbing the successful diggers. The towns, the highways, the gold-fields, became infested by numbers of daring marauders, to whose crime-hardened minds human life and human suffering, to say nothing of mere private property, were a matter of the smallest consideration. Two illustrative incidents may be here alluded to.

The good people of Melbourne had well accustomed themselves to the increasing tales of bush-ranging, as one arrival after another from the opposite shore of Van Diemen's Land added its knot of desperadoes to the criminal throng already accumulated. But hitherto this terrible social feature had ever been confined to its own proper and

original locality, "the bush." Gradually, however, the stimulus of numerous associates, and this incessant recurrence of bold examples in these criminal adventures, had given insuppressible audacity to bush-ranging.

The town was thrown into the greatest consternation one afternoon by the intelligence that a party of bush-rangers had entered its very boundaries, and were "bailing up" all and sundry who crossed their track. This occurred on a Saturday between three and four o'clock, when the citizens were either returning to their homes after business, or enjoying the rural atmosphere. Five men well armed had taken possession of the highway leading from the capital to the suburb of St Kilda. All who appeared were summarily passed through the ordeal of "Stand and deliver," under a penalty of being abused or shot for disobedience. After plundering their different prisoners, the gang transferred them to a place out of view from the road, where they were securely bound, and watched over by one of their captors. For nearly an hour was this extraordinary game carried on, at the distance of little more than a mile from the busiest streets of Melbourne, teeming at the moment with thousands of population. Every one indiscriminately, male and female, lady as well as gentleman, shared the common fate; and when the daring villains at length took to their

horses and made off with their spoils, they left no less than twenty victims behind them, who, as they essayed to undo each other's cords, and listened to the resounding hoofs of the retreating foe, weighed with a doubtful balance the advantages and defects, the good and the evil, that had resulted to the colony from its too celebrated gold-fields.

At another time, somewhat prior to this incident, a large party of returning diggers were on their way from Port Phillip to Launceston, in one of the steam passage-boats. A few hours of the voyage had scarcely elapsed, when a robbery of a quantity of gold was announced from the motley groups of the steerage. A female passenger pointed out three men, whom she had observed to be in concert under very suspicious circumstances at the time. The missing gold, three pounds in weight, and satisfactorily described beforehand by the plundered man, who had himself gathered the treasure at the gold-fields, was found upon one of the accused. All parties, including the witness, were searched, and gold, raw and coined, tumbled plenteously out of every pocket. One had 50 or 60 sovereigns, with various nuggets; others 20, with a bag of dust; and there was upon one or two of the company a sprinkling of watches and jewellery considerably greater than their possessors could have found personal use for, or than might have been looked for in

such a station of life. The depositions taken at Launceston inculpated satisfactorily all the accused parties, who were therefore returned to Melbourne for trial, the robbery having occurred within the Port Phillip harbour. Here some delay took place, when, on the trial proceeding, it was found that the female witness had decamped, after robbing the people with whom she lodged The case therefore partially broke down, only the party on whom the gold was found being convicted upon the evidence of some other fellow passengers, while the remaining two were again turned loose upon society. But the climax to the case was, that principal and accessaries, witness and prosecutor, in short, all parties concerned, for and against the law, were convicts.

These accounts give rather startling glimpses of a basis for orderly or promising society, and for the maintenance of its good order, and they proved the occasion of repeated and indignant protests on the part of the Australasian League against the system of transportation.

This wandering to and fro of numbers of criminal population, the result of the rich and attractive gold-fields, which made Victoria a focus for every character, occasioned equal alarm and indignation amongst her colonists. In the Melbourne gaol, the more atrocious offenders were, almost without ex-

ception, old transported convicts.* At the first criminal assizes for the gold-fields, held at Castlemaine (Mount Alexander), in November 1852, thirty of the accused, out of a total of forty, were ascertained to have been of this class from Van Diemen's Land; and the judge remarked upon the occasion, that within a recently preceding quarter, sixty-six runaway convicts from the same locality had been arraigned and reconvicted for fresh crimes in this colony. The Transportation Question, previously agitated with energy, could scarcely now be discussed with temper; and many who would as soon have thought of parting with all they possessed as of severing the cord that united them to their great Empire, began seriously to balance in their minds, whether Britain herself had not better be cast off, if by that means, and by no other, Australia could get rid of the noxious stream.

The "Convicts' Prevention Bill," a scarifying although not a complete remedy, which emanated from the representative benches of the legislature, was with difficulty pruned down to the possibility of royal assent by a government anxious to cooperate, and not in this particular matter disposed to strain at a gnat during emergencies. The general impression seemed to be, in regard to this measure, that in dealing with an open and streaming gaol,

* Report of Select Committee on Prison Discipline, first session.

to which Van Diemen's Land was then not unaptly compared, the menaced lives and property of the colonists were preferably to be considered to a minute regard for abstract rights and dignities.

This measure, as might have been expected, was condemned by the adjacent colonies, which suffered much less from the evil that occasioned its enactment in Victoria, and accordingly a similar act, proposed for South Australia, was rejected by the legislature of that colony The leading feature of the act, and the head and front of its offending, particularly to Van Diemen's Land, was, that every passenger arriving direct from that colony should satisfy the Victoria authorities that he came not within the provisions of the act. If there was any suspicious circumstance, he was not to be proved guilty, but to prove his own innocence. He must show, if called upon, that he was not a person liable under the meaning of the act, an escaped convict, for instance, nor yet the holder of a mere "conditional pardon;"—the latter being a document which, issued under a questionable form by the Van Diemen's Land government, had the practical effect of a retransportation of the British convict to Victoria—a procedure which, upon a summary judgment by the indignant Victorians, was pronounced to be far too impudent and offensive ever to be constitutional.

The remoter situation of New Zealand prevented the same extent of emigration that took place from the other colonies. The various settlements of these fine islands had not yet attained to a large export commerce. They were therefore not over-supplied with the luxury of money, although abounding in the necessaries of life; and the considerable cost of a passage to the diggings was often not forthcoming from many who were otherwise desirous of proceeding thither. These settlements, however, were eminently benefited—a vast market having been promptly opened for their commencing agricultural produce. Potatoes, already one of the staple products, which for want of a better field of investment had been repeatedly thrown away on California at less than £2 per ton to the grower, were now raised to the remunerative rate of £6 per ton; while the rich and hungry diggers of Melbourne, who readily absorbed every bag that was imported, and cried lustily for more, were paying rates varying between £12 and £20 per ton.

South Australia received the greatest shock from the Victoria gold-fields. She complained that Mount Alexander had carried her population away bodily. The streets of her capital were deserted, and her great Burra-Burra left without hands to pick up the inexhaustible copper ore—in reality far better to her than all the gold. This colony was not perhaps,

at the time we speak of, in the same healthy commercial position that was exhibited by its adjacent sisters, and that enabled them better to weather the preliminary storm. The shares of the Great Mine, the backbone of the colony, had been the subject of a speculative excitement, that now resulted unfavourably on the colonial commerce.

The rapidly departing colonists drained the banks of accumulated deposits, in order to provide a diggings' outfit and expenses. These institutions, concerned for more than themselves, began to fear also for their customers the merchants, and the merchants in their turn for the desponding traders who were indebted to them, and who could neither continue their purchases nor pay for what they had already bought.

Against these disasters was to be placed the anticipated supply of gold which so many, including miners with well skilled hands, had departed to collect. But this relief was a question of time; whereas the crisis was imminent. Two objects were preeminently important to the sufferers: 1. That the gold which, in its present form of exportable merchandise, strained the already oppressed banks and capitalists for cash advances, should itself be made available as money, and thus not only relieve but buoy up the market. 2. That the gold should be largely and promptly attracted, by securing for it

some higher price than the low rates that were current in the adjacent colonies. These views and arguments resulted in the famous "Gold Act" of January 1852, passed with hasty and ardent unanimity by the alarmed legislature, and after some slight demur from the governor on the ground of principle, sanctioned on the ground of expediency. By this measure the gold was made a legal tender as money, at the rate of £3, 11s. per ounce of standard fineness, being 12 to 15 per cent. higher than the current price in Australia at the time of passing the act. The government, about the same time, with creditable spirit and vigour, instituted an overland armed escort direct to Mount Alexander, with the view of giving every facility to the reception of the precious metal.

These operations accomplished the objects that were anticipated. The supplies of gold, although they afterwards fell off in consequence of the effects of the act itself, were for a time very large, and produced rapid changes. Prices rose enormously, insolvencies gradually ceased, and everything once more looked prosperous.

But the common misfortune of such interferences with the currency is, that when they have accomplished, very accurately perhaps, all that was desired by those who are interested, their effects will not stop at this point, and do not alone con-

cern such parties. Much injustice must have been actually done by such a measure to the great mass of the colonists,—an injustice that must have been very perceptible in the final issue, but for the flood-tide of wealth that was brought in common into all those colonies by the gold. The exchange with the surrounding colonies rose against South Australia, and the British currency disappeared from circulation, to re-exhibit itself in the columns of the local prices current, where the sovereign was quoted at a premium in the new money. To the Melbourne speculator and others without the colony, the whole South Australian market lay open for a period at first, at what was really although not nominally a reduced price, owing to the superior power of the purchaser's money; and these parties were not slow to take advantage of the kind providences that fell in their way. The immense exportation of South Australian produce that consequently commenced, occasioned indeed a large influx of gold, but at rather expensive rates of purchase to the colonists; and the multiplied transactions in colonial property of every kind, induced by the continuous advance that took place in all prices, while they gave a pleasing life to trade, were certainly on the other hand a business founded on fictitious causes, so far at least as the inflating effects of legislation could be separated from the real and

unexceptionable benefit of the solid and welcome gold. People, who sold their goods for so many pounds, had subsequently to learn that these were not pounds sterling; and that the power of their money was still further diminished by the deluge of the enhanced currency.

There are always many persons in a commercial body to whom such a state of things brings the most marked prosperity. These are chiefly of the mercantile and trading classes. Their position and vocation call them to incessant dealing. They are ever buying to-day, selling to-morrow, and in a continuously rising market, securing enormous profits by the margin on each of a numberless list of transactions. But these apparent profits to the community (real enough certainly to the individuals who secure them), are, to a great extent at least, so many fragments of the capital of the many, unwittingly thrown into the hands of the few. The quiet unspeculative colonist, typical always of the bulk of a community, parts with his house, we shall suppose, for a thousand pounds. Seeking long in vain on previous occasions for such a price, he now, in the first working of the Gold Act, obtains his limits at once. But when, a few months afterwards, he is necessitated to re-acquire some similar property, he finds then that a sum of two thousand pounds has become necessary for the same purchase. Doubtless he has still his thousand pounds, and with that

fact before him, no sense of loss may be experienced; but yet nevertheless half his capital has really and practically slipped away from him.

Operations upon the currency are always for one side of the account, having only one kind of object —namely, to increase its quantity, to diminish its value, to raise the prices of property; in other words, to assist assets in meeting liabilities. The effect of such measures is uniformly, in a greater or less degree, to confiscate the interests of the great mass of the community.

The Gold Act was to remain in force for one year. At the end of that term the price of gold in the adjacent markets had already advanced up to and even beyond the South Australian limit, so that the measure terminated without reaction. A further eclat was given to it by the approval of the Home Government,—a grace unexpected even by the South Australians themselves, and a case, as I think, happily not paralleled since the famous Bank of England Suspension Act, on which occasion an institution conducting immense business became embarrassed during a crisis, because the government had permanently abstracted nearly the whole of its capital. We must only suppose that these remote patrons of such measures were unaware of the effects of the act in question which they had so hastily approved of.

On this subject I may remark that, even in

South Australia, some of the grosser irregularities that occurred appear not to have been anticipated. The prediction of a depreciated currency was generally disbelieved in the colony, because the price fixed for the gold was still considerably under the London mint rate; and such was the spirit on the subject, that this consequence was still denied, even when sovereigns were selling in the market for 21s. each. Consequently, although bars of gold had been cast at the Assay Office, no provision was made to enable the banks to retire their £1 notes by pieces of gold proportioned to the new currency scale. These notes were presented by their wary holders one by one, or in sums less than the value of the gold bars, and of necessity paid by sovereigns, which the banks soon found were never returned to them in the course of business. This occasioned an issue of small fragments of gold or "dumps," representing a pound in the proportions fixed by the act, and containing in fact rather more gold than a sovereign, although for the time, from the current monetary relations in Australia, less valuable. The next step in the chain of irregularities, was the substitution of a coinage of money or "Tokens" for the uncouth dumps. The measure was now complete, and all its effects in full operation. The banks refused to discharge their notes, acceptances, and other engagements, in that sterling money

which had been the original consideration; and every day and every hour violated some similar contract in the community.

By an estimate made of the quantity of the gold produce of Victoria up to the end of 1852, it appears that there was raised within the colony about four millions six hundred and seven thousand ounces. Of that quantity, about 3,537,000 ounces had been exported, leaving a remainder of 1,070,000 ounces on hand throughout the colony at the time just specified. Of the exported quantity, about 1,860,000 ounces had been transmitted direct from Victoria to London and other extra Australian ports; about 860,000 ounces had gone to Sydney, 570,000 ounces to South Australia, and 247,000 ounces to Van Diemen's Land.

The large quantity shown in this estimate to have been sent to Sydney, was not due to the operation of Sydney diggers at the Victoria mines, so much as to the long sustained superiority, in extent and means, of the Sydney market, which always offered the highest price for the precious metal. The price in South Australia, although for a short time actually higher, and for a longer time nominally so, was generally rather less in reality in consequence of the adverse exchange. The quantity of gold imported into South Australia is also large, and is a creditable indication of the industry of her many colonists

who fought and prospered around Mount Alexander, and of her public spirit in the institution of an expensive and difficult overland armed escort, performing journeys with tons of gold through four hundred miles of the Australian wilderness. By this conveyance, 228,500 ounces of this quantity of gold were conveyed direct to Adelaide at the moderate charge of two per cent. The total quantity seems not beyond a due proportion to the colony under all the circumstances; but if any augmentation was due to the operation of the Gold Act, we have I think seen sufficient of that innovating experiment,—its deceptive operations, its costliness to the general body, not certainly set off by the prosperity of any smaller number, the uncertainty of the commercial future by even the bare possibility of such hap-hazard legislation on occasions of imagined necessity, and its direct variance with all commercial principle—to enable us to pronounce its condemnation.*

Having so long occupied ourselves with the Australian gold-fields, and their immediate effects upon local commerce and society, we may, before concluding, extend the view to the wider field of the world at large, with whose colossal commerce the

* For other remarks on this subject, which at the time was one of considerable discussion, see the two Addresses to the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce appended to this Volume.

precious metal now so abundant in Australia bears the most intimate relationship. This is a subject possessing now a direct and immediate interest to Victoria. It is a subject of frequent discussion among the colonists, who are familiarizing themselves with its bearings and details, and who, as each successive escort arrives from the mines, are daily less sensible of the proverbial dryness of such inquiries. There is not now the old and common mistake of apprehending that the price of gold may fall in the home market in consequence of the large supply—a result certainly not to be apprehended in all time or under any circumstances, so long as the duty of the mint is simply to return in coin, weight for weight, the gold that any fortunate possessor may send to it for that purpose.

But although the price may not alter, seeing that gold, so long as bought with sovereigns, is only buying itself, yet the value of these sovereigns in buying other articles of property may be extensively altered according to the quantity now produced of their component metal, which was lately so rare in the world. The prices of commodities, as is well known, are simply a relationship that is ever adjusting itself between each and all articles, according to the demand that exists for them respectively, and the expense of procuring a continuance of the supply. Thus gold until very recently has borne for

some time a value to silver, weight for weight, as between 15½ and 16 to 1. Either metal is now and has long been applied to a variety of uses in the arts and in coinage, and the annual supply to meet this demand has happened to average between one and two millions of ounces of the gold, and thirty to thirty-five millions of ounces of the silver. Had the annual quantity of gold thus brought into the market been four millions of ounces instead of two,—had it, for example, always been twice as much as it really has been, then the relationship to silver in point of value must have been considerably different. For the same reason, this relationship of gold must have been different also in regard to every other article as well as silver. The value of the gold must have been sensibly less. How much less it might have proved to be, that is to say, at or about what point the lower value would have settled to, is a more difficult question to resolve—one that would depend on circumstances not easily traced out; such, for example, as the uses, other and more extended than at present, to which the gold might have been applied, if it had proved more accessible as to price and quantity.

Now it would appear, that for a considerable number of years prior to the discovery of the Californian mines, by estimates, somewhat various indeed, but sufficient for this general illustration, the

produce of the different gold mines of the world averaged somewhere between one and two millions of ounces annually. Such was the state of the gold market up to the year 1848, during which year the discoveries in California were effected. From this new auriferous region, a mass of the precious metal hitherto unprecedented began now to be thrown upon the world. These discoveries were followed, in the year 1851, by those of New South Wales and Victoria. We have seen that, in the latter colony alone, there was raised from the soil, within the second year only of the discovery, more than double the quantity supplied, during a similar space of time, by the whole world five years previously. From two millions of ounces annually prior to 1848, the increased amount may be estimated to have averaged two and a-half times that quantity for each of the five years that have since elapsed; and this too with every indication of a rapid and somewhat regular progression,—the quantity for 1850 having been estimated at four and a-quarter millions of ounces, that for 1851 at five and a-half millions, while the quantity for 1852 had advanced to more than nine millions of ounces.

The following Table, expressing the value in sterling money of each year's supply since the Californian discoveries, will convey a more accurate idea of the case:—

Annual Supply of Gold since 1848, expressed in Sterling value.*

Year.	California.	Australia.	Elsewhere.	Total.
1848 . .	Unimportant.	—	£8,000,000	£8,000,000
1849 . .	£2,000,000	—	8,000,000	10,000,000
1850 . .	9,000,000	—	8,000,000	17,000,000
1851 . .	13,000,000	£1,000,000	8,000,000	22,000,000
1852 . .	15,000,000	14,000,000	8,000,000	37,000,000
1853, by estimate.	20,000,000	20,000,000	8,000,000	48,000,000

* The amounts in the Table are given in sterling value, the ounce of gold being for convenience taken at the price of £4—a rate, in European values, rather above that of the Californian and other produce, but a little inferior to that of Australian. The produce of all the world besides these two sources, is taken at £8,000,000 yearly, or two millions of ounces, which is about an average of several various estimates. Any sensible depreciation of gold may cause this produce last spoken of to fall off, from some of the old mines being found unprofitable. The amounts are those exported from the different countries as distinguished from what may have been produced, or raised from the soil within a given interval. With reference to California and Australia, large allowance must be made for gold exported without official record. In the first sixteen months of the Victoria export, the proportion of unrecorded to that which appeared upon the Customs documents was estimated to be as great as 1 to 2, and in California it is still estimated by some at 1 to 6.

There is considerable variety in the statements of Californian produce. A detailed and apparently careful estimate by Messrs Hussey and Co., makes the produce up to the end of 1851 about £28,000,000, of which nearly £3,000,000 in raw or coined gold was still in the country. The produce of the first half of 1852 was estimated at nearly £7,000,000. Most accounts since exhibit sanguine expectations of large increase.

I fix the Australian produce this year at the high rate of twenty millions sterling, from observation of the relative quantities in Victoria of the present and the previous year. The season of largest production in that colony, however, had not arrived at the date of the last accounts (2d July). The rains on which so much depends in the present primitive modes of production, had set in largely during June.

The importance of these striking inequalities is further magnified by the circumstance that gold has been adopted by most commercial nations as their "standard of value." In other words, they

July or August, therefore, may be expected to illustrate that more copious produce that attends the winter and spring diggings. The present with the past year compares as follows regarding the quantities of gold brought by armed escort from the mines:—

	1852. Oz. Gold.	1853. Oz. Gold.
January	53,594	186,015
February	56,024	172,329
March	61,382	169,654
April	67,557	133,665
May	76,433	116,812
June	114,563	122,695
July	319,637	

These large supplies commencing with July 1852 continue through spring and early summer, but with a gradual falling off—August, for instance, showing 312,000 oz., September 305,000, October 271,000, November 261,000. December has only 127,000, in consequence of a partial desertion of the diggings towards Christmas. January, as above, has 186,000. The decrease continues with the usual dry weather of summer and autumn, until the late autumn or early winter rains (April—June) occasion the usual increased production. The practice of sending the gold by the armed escorts is now much more general than at first, owing to the danger of robbery on the road in less protected hands. On this account there is not in reality quite the large disproportion in 1853, as compared with 1852, that here appears, and the quantity for 1852 is still minus the quantities taken direct from the mines by the Adelaide Overland Escort (now, I think, discontinued), varying between 10,000 and 40,000 ounces monthly.

Of the Australian production about nine-tenths are supplied by Victoria, and the remainder by New South Wales. Such is the present ratio; but both colonies being highly auriferous, these proportions are of course liable to change by any accident of mining discovery.

are in the habit, for practical convenience, of expressing the value of every kind of property by its relationship to gold—by what it is worth in that metal. All other property, therefore, is bought, or, as the case may be, is sold for so much gold; and the nature of any money contract, any life insurance, for example, or a loan at interest, is this, that, for so much gold given now, the same or so much more, according to the bargain, will be returned at some future time.

This metal, therefore, which, under less distinguishing circumstances, would have comprised merely one among a million of the world's goods and chattels, has thus attained the universal relationship of money; by which relationship, however, no special difficulty is involved beyond the question of the delay, or the expense if there be any such, that may attend the privilege of coinage—an expense or "seigniorage" that may assume the form either of a debasement of the metal, or of a reduced quantity in the return of coin as compared with the bullion received by the mint.

The endless pecuniary engagements of daily life have thus been subjected, whether wittingly or otherwise on the part of those concerned, to all the accidents of supply and demand affecting the gold market. After the interval of three months, three years, or three centuries, these engagements

may prove, *cæteris paribus*, more difficult or more easy to be discharged than at the commencement of the bargain; for the amounts, although still the same in name, may have sensibly altered in power, and in the comparative facility or difficulty with which they can be made good. The inconvenience and risk in dealing with the metal itself have substituted now-a-days an array of paper documents that have well-nigh obscured from sight the original basis to which alone they owe their being, and from which their precise consideration is defined. A Pound Sterling, which, by habit and bank note associations, we have almost abstracted into a separate, mysterious, *sui generis* sort of existence, is simply (dismissing minute fractions) a quarter of an ounce of gold.

Such is the condition of our monetary relations, affecting the pecuniary contracts under every form in our society, and the fathomless depths of our national debt. An interesting inquiry might lie before us, in tracing the effects that have already attended the immense influx of gold into the commercial world, and in speculating upon those which may yet follow. But as so extensive a subject is foreign to the humbler scope of this volume, I shall confine myself to a few general observations.*

* In gathering together these few remarks that seemed to me necessary to complete the subject of the present and the preceding chapter,

An important particular in this question is the total quantity of gold that may have existed in the inter-commercial world at the time of the Californian discoveries. Gold has a peculiar attraction in its weight, natural aspect, and rarity, qualities which

I am indebted, among the multitude of writings on gold and currency that are now everywhere met with, to various articles that appeared in the Economist Newspaper, to one or two interesting compilations by my fellow-colonist Mr Birkmyre, an article in the Athenæum of 15th May 1852, and to a late elaborate view of the whole gold question published on 28th July last (1853) by the Morning Chronicle. These and a hundred other productions on the same interesting subject, are not remarkable for mutual accordance as to the chief points affecting the case, such, for example, as,

1. The quantity of gold in the world at the time of the Californian discovery, variously set down at a value between 400 and upwards of 600 millions sterling, of which 150 millions may represent the quantity of gold coin.

2. The existing quantity of silver, and particularly of the silver coinage; the first being estimated at a total of over twelve hundred millions sterling, of which about 250 millions may be composed of coin. This coin, as being liable to be displaced by the gold, under the altered relationship, in countries where both metals are standards of value, is now an agent of the first consequence, in vacating, as it were, a sphere for a large proportion of the new supplies of gold, and thus graduating the effects of these unusual supplies upon the commercial world.

3. The average annual yield of gold throughout the world for some years prior to 1848, which varies between six and ten millions sterling, and by a good authority (if there be no mistake in printing pounds sterling for ounces of gold—Master of the Mint's Letter regarding an Australian Mint, 7th January 1852), at only two millions sterling annually.

In general I have had occasion to extend greatly the estimates made by these writers of the Australian production, my own local and more recent experience availing me against the scepticism natural elsewhere with regard to such new, remote, and extraordinary discoveries.

have doubtless assisted in recommending it as a material for money of the higher denominations, from remote ages. The present stock, therefore, is a long accumulation of ancestral legacies, in very durable material, diminished only by a slight tear and wear, and by the casualties common to all movable property. The total quantity in use throughout the world at the beginning of 1848 has been variously estimated at about £600,000,000 sterling, or by weight, above one hundred and fifty millions of ounces. The annual loss in this great mass from wear and casualty has been set down at one million and a half sterling. The annual supply during the first forty-seven years of the present century may be stated at from rather more than three to eight millions sterling, the quantity somewhat regularly but slowly increasing. Continuing our backward course, we find the annual quantities generally decreasing until the famous discoveries in America, when a comparative deluge of gold was thrown with destructive effect upon a limited arena, forming a quantity, however, that even a single month of the present production of the world leaves far in the shade. The annual quantity produced in the world for each of the last five years may be set down as averaging nearly twenty millions sterling.

Let us now approach the question of the effect

that the late unusual supplies of gold has produced hitherto upon the value of that metal with regard to other articles. Very many of these other articles, however, are not suitable as the materials of such a comparative illustration. Their price or exchangeable value in gold is powerfully affected by causes special to themselves, and distinct from the accidents affecting the gold produce. These articles are all in reality still as much subject to the effects of the increasing gold supplies, only that the series of effects due to irregularities of their own supply cannot be distinguished from those due to the gold. Cotton, for example, in a year of abundant crop, might be worth per bale even less gold, in the present plentiful supply and cheapness of that metal, than it might have been five years ago when the metal was scarcer than now, but with a bad cotton season, which made the cotton scarce also. Instances of this kind might perhaps be safely applied by the average of a series of years; but in the question before us, such articles of produce are unsuitable for the short interval as yet available to our present experience, and for illustrations of progress year by year. The kindred articles to gold, namely, the other metals themselves, are a class of crops from beneath the earth's surface which are subject to fewer of the extraneous influences that affect those gathered from above, and I shall there-

fore take some of the principal of these articles to illustrate the case.—The following Table presents the prices of each year for six different metals during the last thirteen years:—

Prices of Metals for 1st July of each of the Years 1841-53.

Metal.	Per	1841.	1842.	1843.	1844.	1845.	1846.	1847.	1848.	1849.	1850.	1851.	1852.	1853.
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Copper, cake . .	ton	98	87½	80	84	88½	93	98	88½	79½	84	84	102½	107½
Iron, Br. bars .	„	7	5½	4¼	6⅜	8½	9¼	9⅝	7	5¾	5¾	5½	5⅝	9
Lead, pig	„	20¼	18	16¼	16¼	19¼	18¾	18¾	16¾	16	17½	17	18	23
Spelter	„	33	29	22¾	21¾	24	18⅜	20	13½	15½	14¾	14¾	16	22¼
Tin, Eng. block	„	80	69	60	73	90	92	85	75	73	73	84	87	107½
		d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.
Silver, bars . . .	oz.	60⅛	60	59¼	59⅝	59	59	59½	59½	59⅝	59⅝	60¾	60¼	61½

Silver has since risen to 62¼d., being the highest point it has yet reached. This price was quoted in the beginning of September.

Quicksilver, from its extensive use, might also have claimed a place in the Table, but for the extreme irregularity of its supply, and particularly of late by an extraordinary increase. Thus while the prices of articles generally exhibit so marked an advance for the four years 1850-53, the quotations for quicksilver are quite as far in the opposite direction. For the 1st July of each of these years respectively they appear as follows, viz. per lb. 4s., 3s. 9d., 3s., and 2s. 4d.; showing an increase of supply far exceeding in proportion that of the gold itself.

This considerable interval comprises two eras of general commercial depression, whose crises respec-

tively may be fixed in 1843 and 1848. After each of these years, the returning prosperity brought with it a general rise in prices. From customary experience of such commercial fluctuations, one may assume that the last reaction in prices after 1848, as well as the first after 1843, came about independently of considerations of the new supplies of gold, although doubtless liable to a stimulus soon after 1848 by the effects of these extraordinary supplies. This special stimulus is in fact the question with reference to the Table before us. The influence of the extra supply of the precious, metal subsequently to 1848 must be estimated after allowance for ordinary reactionary causes.

The case of silver as exhibited in the Table is peculiar, and will be presently the subject of further notice. In the case of iron, a demand of unusual extent for numerous railway contracts gave special enhancement to prices in the years 1845-7, as may be observed in the Table; and under this qualification, the present price of this article may be looked upon as the actual maximum. The same remarks as to a maximum price having been attained this year will apply, generally, to all the other items of the Table, although in some cases changes of price are irregular, and in the case of one article, spelter, a comparatively settled market and supplies adequate to the extending demand appear only after 1842.

The facilities of the money market in the beginning of this present year had led to a rapid rise in prices; so that the rates for 1st April are in general very considerably higher than those of the Table for a period three months after. Perhaps the monetary changes since April, so rapid and unexpected, have depressed prices now as compared with what they might have been in a more average state of business; so that any effect reasonably traceable to the gold under present appearances, would claim to be enhanced by this consideration. But however that may be, taking the Table as it now stands, a rise to the very unusual prices it indicates for 1853, sustained as these prices have been for several months of a crisis, graduated also somewhat equally over the long interval of five years, and these the years of our marvellous gold discoveries, forms altogether a fact sufficiently significant. But at the same time the result would not exhibit any remarkable or alarming change hitherto wrought by the agency of the gold; and indeed had this Table been framed only one year earlier, no particular results of any kind arising from the gold could have been at all satisfactorily demonstrated.

Reverting to the case of silver, it will be seen from the preceding Table how stationary is its price, as compared with that of the other metals since the late gold discoveries. The annual supply of silver has increased within the last four or five years by

about one-fourth—an increase, however, that is quite nominal as compared with that of gold. This slow tendency of silver to advance is on first view the more surprising, when we glance at the relative supplies of this metal as compared with gold for a series of past years.

Proportion of Silver to Gold annually supplied to the World in the Year 1800, and since the late Gold Discoveries, 1848-53:—

Year.	Actual quantity in ounces.		Actual value in sterling money.		Proportion of Silver, Gold being 1 or unity.	
	Silver.	Gold.	Silver.	Gold.	By wght.	By value.
1800	30,000,000	814,500	7,840,000	3,258,000	$38\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{2}{5}$
1848	33,500,000	2,000,000	8,630,000	8,000,000	$16\frac{3}{4}$	$1\frac{1}{10}$
1850	36,000,000	4,250,000	9,000,000	17,000,000	$8\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$
1851	38,000,000	5,500,000	9,500,000	22,000,000	7	$\frac{3}{7}$
1852	40,000,000	9,250,000	10,000,000	37,000,000	$4\frac{1}{3}$	$\frac{2}{7}$
1853	42,000,000	12,000,000	10,500,000	48,000,000	$3\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{4}$

To explain the lingering progress in the price of silver amidst this relative inundation of gold, we must turn our attention to a source of supply that is at present peculiar to the former metal, namely, the silver currencies of various nations. In most commercial countries silver as well as gold has been largely used as money, under some established official relationship one to the other. In France and the United States, for example, both metals are alike the legal currency, and silver is consequently very largely employed. In England silver is indeed quite secondary to gold, being permissible

as an optional payment, to the extent of forty shillings only; but this optional privilege, together with its convenience as small money, keeps a large quantity of it afloat.

Now the effect of the progressive cheapening of gold, in giving it a less value in the market than silver, is to occasion the gold coin, under relations as regards the currency that are no longer correct between the two metals, to buy up the silver coin, which is thus thrown as merchandise upon the general market. The par of exchange between the two metals as officially fixed in France, viz. 15·59 of silver to 1 of gold, is about 5s. per oz. for silver. When this metal, therefore, in its bullion or merchandise form is selling for 5s. 2d., which is now a common price, the French silver currency forms a mass of silver actually cheaper by upwards of 3 per cent. than any other silver in the market. This silver coinage is thus naturally bought up, and its place supplied by the gold that has purchased it. The effect of this operation is to give a large additional supply of silver to the world, just as if great discoveries of silver had taken place simultaneously with those of gold. This source of supply is not estimated for in the last Table. It is, as I have said, a source of supply peculiar to silver, and we shall presently see that the operation here brought about is at the same time a source of demand equally peculiar to

the gold, which is taking the place of the silver coin.

It so happens that in the adjustment of the mutual relationship of the gold and silver coinage both of France and the United States, the value affixed to silver had been slightly above its proper proportion at the time to that of gold. This difference amounted in the case of France to about three per cent., and in that of the United States to something less; that is to say, the French government valued silver at 5s. per ounce, or at £1 per four ounces, whereas four ounces of silver were procurable in the market, at the time, at about 8d. less than a pound. The official value, therefore, was to the gold relatively so much more than the real value; the silver went for so much more than it was actually worth. Silver coin being therefore procurable at this advantage as compared with gold, it became in France the great medium of payment, and in the United States acquired also some preferable circulation.

These extensive silver currencies, as might have been predicted, have been promptly attacked by the gold, which is rapidly turning out of office the rival metal and occupying its place. In this operation the gold is instrumental alike in supplying the market with silver, and also in finding a sphere for itself so comprehensive as to absorb very largely

the present unusual supply, and thus materially to graduate the blow that so large an influx of this precious metal might otherwise have given to the diversified monetary relations of society.

In the relations between the gold and silver coinage of Britain, the most important circumstance is, that while no seigniorage or mint charge is made upon gold, a rate of about 4d. per ounce was imposed upon silver. 5s. 2d. per ounce covers this original seigniorage, and the market price of silver now repeatedly touches this extreme, and has even been as high on one late occasion (first week of September 1853) as 5s. 2¼d., at which rate it is evident a crown-piece is worth one farthing additional as bullion silver. Thus the silver currencies of different countries, having all most likely some different rate of seigniorage or relationship to the gold, form so many successive stages by which the effects of the gold are checked and graduated. Should the supply of gold continue at its present rate, of which it affords every promise, the British silver currency will be the next interposing shield after those of France and America have accomplished their office.

The extent of this monetary bulwark of silver currency is probably much greater than is generally imagined. The requirements of a country in regard to metallic currency are very much in an

inverse ratio to the extent of its commerce and the progress and facilities of its commercial institutions; so that France, as compared with Britain and America, with less commerce than either, has probably a larger metallic currency than both together. The amount has been estimated by M. Leon Faucher at £134,000,000 sterling, of which no less than £120,000,000 consists of silver coin. This immense fund—a rather expensive oil to lubricate the commercial machinery of that or any other country—will of itself impose a formidable barrier to the golden torrent from California and Australia. To show how these operations have of late been at work, the following Table exhibits the returns from the different mints of those countries I have alluded to:—

Gold Coinage of Britain, France, and the United States. 1848-53:—*

Year.	London.	Paris.	United States.	Total.
1848	£2,452,000	£1,587,908	£179,000	£4,218,908
1849	2,178,000	1,084,380	1,415,000	4,677,380
1850	1,492,000	3,407,692	7,388,000	12,287,692
1851	4,400,000	10,183,328	10,626,000	25,209,328
1852	8,742,000	1,090,000	10,803,000	20,635,000
	to 1st July	to 1st Sept.	to 1st June	by prop. est.
1853	9,099,000	7,773,841	5,000,000	41,888,761

* Prior to 1848, the gold coinage at Paris, for reasons just alluded to, was comparatively trifling. In 1847, it amounted to £308,240, and in 1846 to £83,456. The silver coinage, on the other hand, has

It is not improbable that but for the operation now going on with these and perhaps other silver currencies, the effects of the present large supplies of gold would have been already more conspicuous. As the question now stands, very large proportions of this unusual supply have been absorbed in the requirement of gold in place of silver coin, and this process of currency exchange, if thus beneficially left to itself, may go on still for years. The depreciation of the gold, however, may be very considerable notwithstanding this graduating check of successive silver currencies. This depreciation is sometimes but inaccurately measured by comparison of prices with silver. But in fact the large supplies of silver that must now be thrown into the market by the rendering of silver coin into bullion, give to this metal also a downward tendency in exchangeable

fallen off in proportion as that of gold has increased. In 1849, it was £7,360,000; in 1850, £3,000,000; in 1851, £2,270,000. The returns of the Paris mint for the present and preceding years, which have not, I think, been hitherto published in this country, were courteously furnished me on application at that institution. The marked falling off at that mint in the gold coinage of 1852 is interesting in connexion with a reactionary fall in the price of silver from the high rates of 1851, caused by demands from Holland, where the standard had been made silver solely to exclusion of gold, and from other quarters. Equally interesting is the unprecedented demand of the following year, connected as it doubtless is with some present aspects which the Bank of England seems to have been compelled to construe into an approaching crisis, without however the usual symptoms of such occurrences being manifest.

value, at a very little less rapid rate than the gold itself. Both metals are embarked on the same stream, and will continue company, although at some slight and increasing remove from each other, for a considerable interval of time.

The consequences of these unusual supplies of gold form indeed a very curious inquiry as regards the interests of commerce and society. If we are to suppose that the effects by which, for example, the gold composing a pound sterling is, in some years hence, to be worth, in comparison with all other commodities, only a half or even three-fourths of what it is worth at present, we reflect with instinctive alarm upon the consequences, however delicately they may be graduated, to the immense world of monetary engagements.

Opinions are sometimes expressed, to the effect that the question should be entertained of a change of the standard from gold, which has thus become so abundant, to some other metal. These opinions are not now so frequently indulged in since the late unexpected aspect of our money market, and the fall in prices from the extravagant rates of March and April last. To step from one standard to another by mere legislative enactment may seem to theoretical inquiry a very easy process. Laws are to be thus summarily passed, which must involve in anxious and speculative uncertainty ten thousand times ten

thousand contracts, which are now, without any intermeddling at all, day by day commenced, conducted, and terminated, to the mutual satisfaction of all parties concerned. The legislator, stretching his magic wand over a dazzling field of gold, may depose this vast mass of metal from its ancient office in the commercial world, and appoint another to reign in its stead. But let us anticipate some results.

What metal is to be substituted? And what is to guarantee society against vagaries in the supply of the new material similar to those that now characterize the gold? And next, what principle is to guide the relative proportions of the two metals, in order to accomplish the necessary transfer of the Pound Sterling from one to the other—from a quarter ounce of gold, to a drachm, an ounce, or other definite quantity of some different metal? Is the newly appointed metal to take the relative proportion to gold that it happened to hold just prior to any serious thought being entertained about the proposed change of the standard? or is it to be the rate at which the one stood to the other just prior to the late disturbing gold discoveries? or ought it to be the new relationship the metals in question have rapidly assumed since official discussion commenced on the subject, with its anticipated result of throwing upon the market an immense mass of the

one metal, to its great depreciation, and draining it of a similar amount of the other, to a corresponding advance of price? But what relative value are these two all-important metals likely to subside to at last? And meanwhile what is to guide the commercial world in the stream of contracts of every kind which the welfare and maintenance of society incessantly call for? The public, as they experience the effects of the proposition here alluded to, will be apt to reflect, and with no small alarm, that they are being relieved by an over-anxious government from a crisis which they never experienced, by means of an ordeal to which the bursting of the Mississippi or South Sea bubbles would compare like the hurricane in a teapot.

The mere possibility of such an interference is of itself a serious public disadvantage, and may even already operate to an appreciably injurious extent, in restraining those various and innumerable operations that have, perhaps years since, been commenced by foreseeing capitalists in anticipation of the effects of these gold discoveries. All such operations, which have the one main object of securing at present prices other property than gold, in anticipation of higher prices hereafter, are calculated, when judiciously made—when made, that is to say, not only with the intention of personal profit, but with that advantage as the actual result, to graduate

the impending change, and to equalize its operation throughout all commerce.

Let us imagine for an instant that no confusion causing term of Pound Sterling had ever been introduced at all into our language and transactions; that a spade had always to this moment been called a spade; in short, that in all our bargains and all engagements relating to money, a quarter ounce of gold had been called simply what it is; would parliament or any other authority have ever seriously conceived, in that case, the idea of altering or setting aside such plain engagements? Would they have contemplated to interfere with a contract by which one party has bound himself to pay another party in three months one hundred quarter ounces of gold in return for ninety-nine presently received, or by which a third party pays the same quantity of this metal yearly during the life of a fourth party, in return for the present consideration of a thousand such pieces? Would they have ventured to enact that for these ounces of gold there should be substituted so many pounds of silver or so many drachms of platinum? Would they have thus interfered with ten thousand or ten millions of such clear contracts, many of them ending, and as many others commencing, during the very hours of debate, and upon the very moments of passing the proposed intervention statute? By the facility, the danger-

ous and deceptive facility, of still reclaiming the word Pound, there seems a warrant for enacting changes otherwise never to be dreamed of; for what is a Pound but, as already stated, and saving a minute fraction, a quarter of an ounce of gold.

That many individuals, having a fixed money property or income, may hereafter be injured by this prospective depreciation of gold is quite undoubted. Slow as may be the progress of this decline, and graduated downwards by the opposing powers of inventive industry and by successive natural causes, whose combined operation is infinitely more ameliorative in this question than the most consummate legislation, nevertheless the fixed annual mite of the widow and the pensionary will become year after year of less and less avail, effecting a change in the circumstances of these parties not the less real because possibly imperceptible even to the recipients themselves. Such parties are the holders of considerable amounts of the Public Stocks, and will cling to the yearly diminishing pittance with a patriotic faith which nothing in the present or the future can impair. But if we sum up the whole number who are so circumstanced, and if we add to these all others throughout the country who hold a similarity of position with regard to monetary arrangements generally, what is this section, as compared to the mass of the

community—to the great bulk of the people who are daily and hourly accommodating themselves precisely to the relations of the day in which they find they are placed, and upon whom any change like that involved in a change of the currency would fall like a needless tempest, to throw everything into a confusion of which no one could see the issue.

That the government, regarded in the light of the national debtor, will gain, and perhaps gain immensely, by the change now going on in the gold-market, is very clear. The annual interest for which the country is liable is more easily defrayed, in proportion as the ounces or tons of gold in which it is payable are more abundant and procurable at less cost; and, for the same reason, the difficulty regarding the repayment of the principal is proportionately diminished. Had the gold production latterly, instead of increasing so greatly, been proportionately diminished, the giant debtor in question would have been a serious loser; and perhaps it may be estimated, all incidents considered, that, up to 1848 or 1849, the public debtor, with reference to the public creditor, was considerably the loser under the accidents that had until then affected the demand and the supply in the gold-market.

Let it still be admitted, however, that the object which has in view the compensation of the public

creditor for an unexpected revolution in the Pound Sterling of a tendency contrary to his interests, is noble and worthy of consideration; that it is, in fact, the gratuitous integrity of a great nation setting aside the strict letter of agreements in favour of the most generous interpretation of their spirit and intention. Now, although the great proportion of fund-holders buy to-day and sell to-morrow, come and disappear within intervals of time that admit of no perceptible or material step in the slowly retreating value of the amounts involved; there is still a proportion who will act otherwise, who, with an anchor in the state, would ride out every crisis, and would receive with the like implicit faith the Pound Sterling, girt as it presently is with all its respectable power, and the same commodity reduced, as it might possibly be, to the power that is now exercised by its weight in silver. If the nation, therefore, must be scrupulously upright, and anything can be made of such cases, let it take an after-estimate, and rather administer a gracious and well appreciated relief of some few millions sterling to several hundreds, perhaps thousands, of poor recipients, than wantonly dismiss to the winds of stock exchange speculation an approaching national saving, possibly of many times that amount; and this, too, by means of some measure of a general bearing, productive perhaps of irregular profit to many,

certainly of ruin to many more, of serious inconvenience to every one, of injurious uncertainty, both as an act and a precedent, to the monetary world, and of permanent disgrace to our commercial sagacity.

Through the general infusion of a gold currency, the monetary position of the principal commercial nations is now acquiring a similarity that may prove eminently available for many useful purposes of international trade and communication. The general use of gold money will sustain the value and extend the basis of the material of our currency, rendering it yearly less liable to any extensive or even inconvenient variation from the accidents of external supply. Foreign exchanges also are thus facilitated, and foreign commerce rendered more popular. One cannot but hope for the establishment of some common monetary unit, having the same weight and quality of gold, upon which a common system for nations may be based,—a system by which it might be alike necessary and advantageous to substitute for the accident of a Pound Sterling the principle of some ascertained and immutable quantity, and for a perplexing decimal some simple sub-multiple of national or general quantitative standards. Certainly no time was ever more opportune than the present, when in a general disarrangement of the relations of the pre-

cious metals to one another, the changes of all denominations of money could be easily effected, not excepting even the gold itself, whose unsettled value at present and for some time to come is favourable for engrafting, with comparative inconvenience, or at least with more ready acceptance, any fundamental alteration. This favourable conjuncture can scarcely be looked for again. For the present, the facilities of a decimal money-system, now promised to the country, may succeed, as we must hope, in shaking the fixed habits of Englishmen into an improvement of their system of weights and measures,—a department which seems to have been mainly regulated on principles thrown out of the dice-box.*

* A few further questions of great interest here naturally suggest themselves, and I put them in the form of a note.

1. The silver currencies of the principal commercial countries, when not protected by great debasement or an unusual seigniorage, must all now, if the natural course of things be not officially checked, gradually disappear with these large supplies and lowering values of gold, and that of Britain with the rest. The question of a reinstitution of these currencies suggests the inquiry, In what manner? and to what extent? The advantage of extensive silver currencies in stemming the effects of irregular gold supplies is a subject we have just been adverting to. But if the basis of the gold, as we may now perhaps safely assume, is henceforth to prove so extensive, over the rapidly expanding commercial arena of the world, as to defy any inconvenient disturbance hereafter, we may adventure some consideration upon the disadvantages of such collateral currencies. The constant liability to an alteration of the fixed official relationship between the two metals exposes either the silver or the gold to be practically withdrawn, and perhaps the more suitable of the two. This system exposes the creditor portion of society

The career of the gold, in the unwonted abundance with which it has of late visited the world,

to a perpetual disadvantage in favour of the debtor. An extensive recoinage of silver would also now very seriously disarrange the silver market, and soon occasion a different, perhaps a widely different, relationship of value between the two metals from that which might be determined upon from their present rates to each other. Would not the adoption of a single standard prevent needless complications of commercial contracts and international exchanges? Does public convenience require a legal tender in silver, even to the extent of 40s.? and would not an extent short of one pound, of the lowest bank note issue, be sufficient, or even less, if smaller gold pieces were made abundant?

2. Does not an inspection of the table of coinages in the text (*ante*, page 195), our own country's column, for example, suggest that much of all this gold that has so lately been coined, must in the vicissitudes of commerce have been speedily remelted? This appears probable even with great allowances for the replacing of silver currencies. Large masses of the metal, reduced with laborious precision to the standard composition, and then coined at the public cost, are, by some turn in exchanges, transferred, direct perhaps, to other regions, to reappear within a brief interval, in the form of bullion *en route* for America, or gold watches in the manufactories of Paris or Geneva, or possibly, by some other destiny, to be again presented at the mint as gold bullion for the same preliminaries and the same coinage. We find that three countries only have during the last six years been coining a quantity of gold exceeding 3-4ths of the entire yield of these years—a proportion which, when not explained by the supposition of melting down and repeated coinage, seems far beyond all proportion, when we consider the currency requirements of other countries and of the arts generally. Britain for the first half of the present year has been coining at the rate of more than eighteen millions sterling annually. Is not this a needless charge upon the country, that might be made good by the imposition of a small seigniorage? Foreign gold coin that if not subjected to such a charge would doubtless supplant the British, were both in free circulation in this country. But this is not the case at present, and is it likely to be the case in the event of a small seigniorage? and if not, does any other inconvenience seem

like that of all great agents in sublunary affairs, is doubtless for both good and evil. If there is a

likely to arise? Could there be no arrangement with the chief commercial states as to one rate of seigniorage, as well as one value of a common monetary unit?

3. If a small seigniorage upon all the coinage would meet the mint expenditure, is it desirable to prohibit in any way the melting of coin? There are obvious reasons for prohibiting the public from coining; but when the public have bought the coin from the mint, when they have paid the cost of an article that may without injury to any one be reproduced for ever on the same terms, is there any practical principle involved in restricting the free disposal of this official manufacture?

4. The Bank of England is proverbially the pulse of the commercial world—an institution of immense business, and founded upon a basis of capital worthy of its position. But in practical position this institution is carrying on its vast commerce upon a wholly inadequate basis. Of a capital of 14½ millions, 11 millions or three-fourths are locked up in a permanent loan to the government, and wholly unavailable in emergencies, except for the gratuitous accrediting of an institution which, possibly, no one ever thought of doubting. But no amount of confidence will avert the operation of foreign exchanges, and the consequent withdrawal of deposits and drain of coin. When a bank has not that available backbone of every such institution, an adequate and freely disposable capital, which enables it to comport itself easily under every commercial storm, is it not apt to act prematurely and violently—not erroneously perhaps as regards the direction of any proceeding, but more promptly or less gently than might have been necessary under easier circumstances—under the circumstance, for example, of the bank possessing under emergencies eleven millions more assets than usual hitherto, available either at once or within a brief interval? We have acquired a habit of considering the bank pressure with reference solely to its check upon injurious speculation, without considering also the useful enterprises that are simultaneously depressed or destroyed. The effects of every check, whether timely or otherwise, soon pass away in the rapid course of events, and the returning prosperity obliterates the past. But if the eye could accurately scan the effect of every restrictive measure emanating from the Bank Parlour, enhanced as that effect often is upon the public by the

great preponderance of good, we shall feel the less disposed to cavil at the minor evil. One of the principal of these evils is ever apt to be invested with the most attractive features. I allude to the deceptive operation of a progressive rise of prices, that must result from a progressive reduction in the value of the gold currency. Under such circumstances, the man of £10,000 to-day and of the same amount a few years hence, is evidently not in the same circumstances. His capital has been diminished. His position resembles that of a man holding the same quantity of wheat during a year of short and a year of full harvest. This gradual advance of prices, which is ever a stimulus to increased exchange operations, gives rise to large apparent profits, which are really so many deductions from capital. The house, the farm, the merchandise, are bought and sold, and sold again, while the successive additions of price are, generally speaking, dealt with as profits—in short as if they were

aspect of the bank's financial statement, might it not occasionally be found that where one evil was prevented, ten good purposes were thwarted, and the country saved alike from a small damage and a great benefit! There is of course an ever-recurring call for the exercise of a check; but is the time of this check not precipitated,—is the check itself not injuriously severe, from alarm of the directors or the public at a financial position that is not precisely just either to the Bank or the times—a position of difficulty needlessly encountered in this particular case, but one which we must hope every other such institution will feel, whether in credit or not, in attempting to carry on operations with inadequate means!

a part of the annual industrial income of the country, and in most cases spent accordingly. And profits they are indeed, as regards the individuals who have secured them; but as regards the entire body, this expenditure, as already stated, is that of capital

This is in reality the attractive result that most people aim at in experiments and theories respecting the currency. Such was the result of the Bank of England Suspension Act, which many thought had benefited the country, until undeceived by the return to cash payments, or, in other words, the return to the true Pound Sterling from a nondescript pound of a lesser value. But in the case that has so recently come upon us, where natural circumstances only are in operation, there is no forfeiture of principle, no reactionary return to a lost path. All parties have, practically, laid their account to abide by these accidents, which are in reality not inconvenient, and which are every day being accorded to by society; and if state interference be withheld, the future is cleared of an agent far more uncertain and dangerous than the wildest extremes of the natural market.

The stimulus to commerce, and the aspect of general prosperity that result during the interval while money is settling down to some lower value as compared with other property, cause such intervals

to prove ever attractive to a commercial people. Practically the same results attend eras of monetary facilities, commonly known as "good times." It is in such good times that most of our great enterprises are launched into existence—enterprises that at other seasons would have met with no countenance. Failures occur, mistakes are committed in these projects, and numbers are involved in ruin; but for every one such case, ten schemes perhaps have passed the reactionary ordeal, and have approved their utility by their success. It is to these waves of commerce that we mainly owe the rapidity of our national progress. The average prudence of mankind, were we not subject to these unequal flights, might unquestionably be adequate to restrain us from many erroneous or unprofitable adventures; but the same dull habitual reserve would have been equally preventive of a thousand enterprises that have given a progressive feature of the most promising character to modern society.

CHAPTER VII.

A VISIT TO THE VICTORIA DIGGINGS.

MOUNT ALEXANDER GOLD-FIELDS.

Beauties of Australian Spring—Month of October—Start from Melbourne—Bad Roads—By-route over the Plains—Greenhills—The Bush Inn—Gold Escort—Reports of Discovery of a great Nugget—Enter the Black Forest—Its Difficulties and Dangers—View of Mount Alexander—Case of Murder—Kyneton Streets and Hotels—Road-making — Sawpit Gully — Forest Creek Diggings — Official Quarters—Castlemaine—Squatters *v.* Diggers—Large Assemblage—Improved Washing Contrivances—Odd Names—Criminal Circuit Courts for the Diggings—Public Schools—Religious Ministrations at the Gold-fields—Cases at Police Court—Post-office—Gold-digging Licenses.

THE month of October has always appeared to me the finest season of the year in this part of Australia. The country then exhibits one continuous and universal verdure. The grass is intermingled with innumerable native flowers, and the air delightfully perfumed from the yellow blossom of the acacia. The temperature, too, is generally such as genially accords with the human frame. The thermometer rises to 70° in the day, and descends under 60° at night. We alternately hug the blankets at

midnight, and bask in the pleasant rays of the noonday sun. There are, indeed, shades and diversities to this agreeable picture; for, during this favoured month, I have frequently witnessed sleet and hail, hoar-frost and storms, in the full proportion due to a very changeable climate. Nevertheless, I can recommend this season of the year to the preferable choice of the numerous tourists whom the attractions of the gold-fields and the facilities of steam-navigation will now probably bring to our colony.

This favoured month was accordingly selected for an excursion to the gold-fields; and early in the afternoon of a fine October day (1852) the party had assembled in readiness, consisting at the first starting of five persons, including the servant of one of our number. Mounted on good nags, and burdened with as little equipment as human wants would permit, we enjoyed a pleasant sense of personal freedom and locomotive power. We purposed to make the Greenhills that evening, a pastoral station about twenty-five miles from town.

Emerging from Melbourne, we came upon a number of canvass tents erected by newly arrived emigrants, who had found the lodgings in town too crowded or too expensive. This was not the famous "Canvass Town," which, with its airy mansions and its 4000 or 5000 inhabitants, lay in an opposite

direction about a mile to the south-east, beyond the intervening stream of the Yarra. Many vehicles, usually loaded with flour, oats, sugar, tea, and other necessaries, were rolling slowly along our line of road, together with still larger numbers of horse and foot passengers, all bound for "the diggings." Two miles out, a dozen diggers lay on a grassy bank enjoying the warm sun. Their first stage had been a short one, but their knapsacks were weighty, the day excusably warm, and they seemed to reckon upon a decided relief in transferring the weight and contents of a bottle or two of their baggage from the outward to the inward man. We left them to their present enjoyments and their golden dreams, and pressed onwards.

Having a guide to the Greenhills in the person of the overseer, we adventured upon a cut of our own; and after passing the busy village of Flemington, three miles from Melbourne, and thronged with going and returning gold-diggers, we struck off to the left of the main Mount Macedon road. At a little distance a dreadful specimen of Australian roads awaited us, our horses having to wade for two hundred yards up nearly to their bellies in mud. A stranger is puzzled to know how vehicles get along upon such roads. It is really edifying to witness the patient endurance with which the teams of bullocks drag the ponderous drays through such crises of their long journeys.

Our course was north-westerly. We crossed the Salt Water river, a branch of the Yarra, by a wooden bridge, where the tollman charged us one shilling each, and was understood to be earning for the proprietor a sum of £1200 a-week. Perhaps this was no great exaggeration. But we were impressed that the amount, whatever it was, might have been readily doubled by some improvement of the two hundred yards of mudway from which we had just extricated ourselves.

After passing a few fields of fine soil covered with luxuriant-looking crops, we entered an immense plain, on which there was scarcely the appearance of the smallest tree. The hills of the interior appeared on the far horizon to the west and north, distant from twenty to thirty miles. A few clumps of small trees had once been sparingly interspersed over the grassy flat, as was here and there indicated by the stunted remnants; but they had already been all cut down for the domestic uses of the scattered pastoral occupants, and to furnish fires for travelling diggers or other wayfaring colonists.

Here and there over the plain, a few vehicles were to be seen wending their way to the northward, loaded with provisions and equipments, this divergence being preferred, in such instances, to the irregularities and dangers of some parts of the main road. The great human stream, however, held together in train like sheep upon the beaten track,

and as we had left this for a time, we pursued our way, with but little variety of incident, until we reached the beautiful and picturesque locality of the Greenhills.

Even the naked plains, covered as they now were with their luxuriant grass, had appeared to us respectable scenery; but now surrounded by the variety of hill and dale, the running stream at our feet, and the forest and highlands in front of us, the prospect was decidedly improved, and not the less so from experience of the usual hospitality of the bush with which we were welcomed.

Friends of a less desirable description welcomed us also after their own fashion, for on going into the garden without our hats, to enjoy the fine afternoon, we were immediately attacked by a cloud of furious mosquitoes. These nuisances of the finer climates of the world seem to pervade the whole of this country during the warmer months of the year; but they are not particularly troublesome in Victoria, unless among rank and moist vegetation, or in the vicinity of water. Melbourne was free from them for some years at first, but they are now the numerous and regular visiters of every summer.

Next morning we had considerable rain; but the day clearing up at noon, we resumed our journey. We were piloted through the open forest about nine miles in a northerly and westerly direction, till we

made the Bush Inn, where we re-entered the main road to the diggings, at a distance of about 30 miles from Melbourne. Within half-a-mile of this place, while still in the forest, the sound of drays and bullock-bells, the crack of whips, and the increasing wheelmarks over the grass, told us we were approaching once more the busy and noisy haunts of men.

About five hundred yards off the road at this place, we met the gold escort proceeding to town from Bendigo and Mount Alexander. This party pertained to the "Victoria Escort Company," which had been established some months previously, in opposition to the government escort, whose arrangements had not been so prompt and accommodating as were found desirable. There were four or five carts, and a dozen armed troopers, besides several parties who appeared to be following for the sake of company or protection. On inquiry, we learned that the quantity of gold on the present occasion was above 54,000 ounces. This escort is weekly, like that of the government, by whom the system of thus escorting the gold by an armed force to town had been commenced above a year before, and was still in operation. As the business increased, the official operations, particularly in the delivery of the various parcels after arrival in town, became so dilatory, that a rival was tempted into

the field, who at present succeeds, I believe, in securing much the better half of the current traffic.

Passing the Bush Inn, we caught up with ready ears a report just arrived from the interior, of the discovery of an immense nugget of solid gold weighing ninety pounds, and said to have been dug up at Bendigo. This rumour, which we afterwards found to be true, had travelled with extraordinary rapidity; for, on reaching Bendigo, we learned that, two days prior to the time of this news at the Inn, a large nugget had been actually discovered, and we ourselves had the pleasure of handling the precious fragment in the commissioner's tent at that place, where it had been lodged for safe transmission to town. The exact weight was 45 lbs. 9 ounces, forming, I believe, one of the largest masses of gold of this description that had hitherto been discovered in the world. The specimen had been but imperfectly freed from clay and other matters, which still filled some of the cavities, and added probably three ounces to the weight. Three other large nuggets had previously been found, and all I believe at Bendigo; one weighing 27 lbs. 8 oz., exceedingly bright and pure; another, 28 lbs. 4 oz., with some iron incrustation and small fragments of quartz; the third weighing 24 lbs. These valuable pieces of property were dignified with very lofty titles, such as the Victoria nugget, the Prince Al-

bert nugget, &c.; but there being no patent rights in such nomenclature, a considerable number of these high personages, like triple or quadruple sets in bills of exchange, were often floating about the market at one and the same time. The piece of 28 lbs. 4 oz., being the largest Australian mass of its day, was bought by the colonial government for £1650, for the purpose of being presented to the Queen.

There was evidently plenty of custom and plenty of money-making at the Bush Inn; but as we did not just then require any aid for either man or beast, we passed onwards. We had now to enter "The Black Forest,"—an extensive locality already celebrated for two great Victorian evils, bad roads and bush-rangers. The latter we fortunately did not encounter, either here or at any other part of our journey. But as our towns and gold-fields—the localities of wealth and population—are now swarming with the runaway convicts, or the *Expirees* sent to us, *via* Van Diemen's Land, by our good old mother-country, matters are approaching somewhat of a crisis in this respect. The hardened and atrocious offenders of these colonies, almost without exception, prove to have been transported British convicts. Public feeling has become excited on the subject, and one almost sighs for the summary processes of our republican neighbours across the

Pacific, which appear already to have beneficially weeded the community.

Let us return to the other evil, the bad roads. Ever and anon as you pass along the bush-tracks of this colony, you come to what is called "a gully," which is simply a hollow, the bed of some temporary rivulet, called by colonial custom a creek. The hollow is of itself a sufficiently bad business, both in going down on the one side and rising up on the other, for the heavy and well-loaded drays and other vehicles that frequent the interior. But at the bottom of the hollow there is usually in addition a groove of a perpendicular character, from a foot to a yard or two in depth, and of every variety of breadth, which the casual rushing stream has scooped out, more particularly after the traffic upon the surface has removed the protecting grass, which previously perhaps had in some instances formed a verdant and unbroken bed for the creek. The safe crossing of these gullies is the great business of the bullock-driver; it is in fact the great trial of his skill, and a most difficult and vexatious trial it frequently is.

I have not yet alluded to a third variety of the road, and one that at this part of our journey was more immediately before our eyes, namely, the swamp. Instead of the hollow and the groove, we have occasionally a soft flat bed of fifty or five

hundred yards, where the wheels sink up to the axle, and are not to be drawn out again by any amount of patience or ingenuity, by a hundred lashes upon the bullocks, or a thousand execrations from the drivers.

Several cases of this sort were now before us, as we looked back from a rising ground that we were ascending to enter the Black Forest. It was really distressing to consider the difficulties and disadvantages resulting to a new country from the want of roads. Australia is, in this respect, fortunate in the dryness of the climate during the summer months. The month of October, in which we now travelled, is in the midst of spring, and the country was not then sufficiently dry, as regarded the rich or moist soils, to exhibit a surface hard enough for travelling purposes. In November or December most of these swampy crossings exhibit a firm surface, the winter streamlet having disappeared. Even the gullies are more passable, as the soft mud at the bottom has probably dried up, or some good crossing can be effected above or below the line of road. Prior to the gold discoveries, nearly all the interior traffic was effected during the summer months, and it was therefore accomplished, comparatively speaking, without inconvenience or expense. The wants of the masses at the gold-mines, however, maintained the carrying system

throughout the entire winter; and so great were the difficulties, so urgent the requirements, that the rate of carriage to Bendigo, about 105 miles from Melbourne, rose for a time to as much as £130, and even £150 per ton.

Entering the Black Forest, we avoided the muddy line of the regular track, keeping half-a-mile or a mile to the right. This name is apt to mislead the non-Australian reader. The Black Forest had no American character about it—no gigantic limbs surmounted by a dense foliage that obscured the noonday sun. We were still in the open forest scenery peculiar to Australia, with the universal grass beneath our feet, and the cattle belonging to some pastoral lessee of the crown contentedly grazing about us. The character of the trees, I presume, has been the cause of the name in question—the stringy bark tree, which has a charred aspect from occasional bush-fires, and the blackwood tree. These formed the chief vegetation in the larger form that had arisen from the wet and rather sour soil of which the forest land was composed. The common red-gum tree appeared here and there; but when we emerged from the forest upon a firmer and better soil, this old and accustomed friend appeared once more in his usual preponderance.

We speculated on the fortunes of the recently projected railway to Mount Alexander, Bendigo,

and the river Murray. The colonial government having now conceded to the company all the privileges that were asked for, the scheme will undoubtedly go on. And truly it will introduce a marvellous change! The annual expenses of carriage on this line, exclusive of passenger traffic, cannot be less at present than one million sterling —more perhaps than the whole railway will cost.

While we dreamt of the glories of the future, Mount Alexander hove in sight as we emerged safely from the northern edge of the forest. It had a flat-topped appearance, with nothing very striking had it been any other object than Mount Alexander. But this was, emphatically, "The Mount," the great metropolis of the gold-fields. After a proper sense of awe had passed over us, we pushed onwards for the interior township of Kyneton, where we intended resting for the night.

We halted hereabouts, however, at a wayside inn, to bait our horses, and get a morsel of lunch for ourselves. While enjoying a bottle of London ale (which cost, I think, either 4s. or 5s.), the police magistrate of the district arrived, accompanied by the chief constable. He had just returned from a neighbouring public-house, where a murder had been committed the day before. A man had deliberately shot his mate, for the purpose apparently of possessing himself of the whole proceeds of their

joint labours at the mines. The wife of the murdered man and other parties were either in the room or hard by, and the former struck the murderer over the head with the butend of the gun. The man was secured, tried, and sentenced for murder. These atrocious crimes are frequently caused by drunken excitement, frequently also from the hardened character of the ruffians who frequent the mines: our Van Diemen's Land friends again.

The worthy magistrate started with us for Kyneton. Passing Carlsruhe, one of the early pastoral stations of the colony, our eyes were agreeably refreshed by the spectacle of a number of well-grown peach and plum trees, then in full blossom. This place has now been converted into a head police station. It stands in the midst of a rich and beautiful country.

The Kyneton streets presented a dreadful aspect, and promptly suggested the benefits of a mayor and corporation. Salaries, expenses, and town-rates, are the dark side of this picture, and I fear that until Kyneton is larger and richer, the dark side will always be uppermost with the residents. We got to Fentum's hotel, where we housed our nags, and soon found ourselves comfortably seated in an elegant little parlour. The building is of wood, and the part devoted to the customers other than diggers—they are a small proportion in this

neighbourhood—is very neatly fitted up. The diggers' part of these hotels seems to be kept apart as much as possible, for reasons which the noise of the evening explained to us. The whole of this establishment is upon a scale not unworthy of a large town.

We were now twenty-two miles from the diggings. The country was of fair average attraction as we passed along next day, and gave tolerably good footing to the horses. Here and there we passed attempts at repairs and road-making. These things are done now at enormous expense—so much as £5000 per mile for a well-made macadamized road. Our hopes, therefore, are now centred in railways.

Here is the famous Sawpit Gully, only five miles from the diggings. This is the scene of many a robbery and outrage. Here the thirsty digger, returning from his wholesome fast at the diggings, where no licenses to sell fermented liquors are permitted, pulls up for his first stage, and with full pockets his wants are promptly attended to. Several wooden edifices for public houses are either built or in progress.

We took some refreshment here, and passed quickly on. But after two miles' journey we found we had taken the Bendigo road to the right, instead of that to Forest Creek on the left. We therefore

struck into the bush to meet the latter road half-way to the mines. All this country, like much more we had already passed, seemed auriferous, amongst other signs, by the usual white quartz fragments that were scattered over the surface. Whilst we were looking around, a large kangaroo bounded over a hillock before us. It was really a pleasing and unexpected vision in that locality, so nigh to the busy haunts of man; for, from the top of the same hillock, we descried the outskirts of the diggings, distant between two and three miles.

The broad beaten white roadway, the dust, the noise of vehicles and draught cattle, told us that we were once more, and without mistake, on the proper path for Forest Creek. The rival divergence of drays and passengers to Bendigo was very considerable, both roads appearing equally frequented. The latter diggings had most repute for their golden harvests. All the great and glorious nuggets had been found there. But it had all the disadvantages of being thirty miles further away. And great disadvantages these were to those who were the victims of average results—the scapegoats, as it were, who in the freaks of fortune adjusted the balance with the extra lucky. These, when they earned only their ounce or half-ounce a-week, or, perchance, sometimes nothing whatever, began to consider that they had better earn these negative fortunes at

Mount Alexander, where the flour, the sugar, and the tea, were a trifle less in the daily reckoning. These reasons appeared occasionally infectious, and Bendigo, like an overcrowded beehive, was ever and again in a state of swarm. In this manner there had been recently great accessions to Forest Creek; some of whose branch diggings were, about the time of our visit, in high repute.

The first indication of the presence of the diggings was a number of holes, like newly made graves, in the lower part of the creek-bed by the roadside. In a few minutes more, the diggings opened upon us. There was a long vista of heterogeneous scenery, where the beauties of nature were everywhere impaired by the arts of man. The road wound irregularly through scattered tents, bark huts, and rough wooden edifices, indicative in everything of a transitory and make-shift scene. Numbers of these structures exhibited aloft, upon the top of a long branch or stick, small flags that played in the breeze, and indicated some public capacity on the part of the occupant beneath, who was an agent, a storekeeper, a doctor, &c. From the numerous proportions of these flags, one might judge that the community before us felt themselves amicably dependent one upon the other, having a variety of ways and means of mutual access to the great earnings that were being made around them:

"a nation of shopkeepers," for certainly every one was trading in some way.

Here was a blacksmith firing away in his particular department. The shoeing of horses, the pointing of picks, and restoring the wearied and worn-out edges of shovels, comprehended the sphere of his labours. His stock of iron was ludicrously small for such a rich tradesman as he probably was. But the profits were a fortune notwithstanding. He was busy as a bee. The earnings were a pound an hour, and sometimes two. Every leisure minute was like a shilling running out at the doorway. There was therefore no rest for him. Next comes a doctor. His house may be five feet square. If you suggest six, it is a question. There he is, drugs and all, compactly wedged: Doctor Senna, an apothecary I could have guessed, if there be anything in a name. Everybody in the line, from the apothecary upwards, is doctor here. The learned doctor complains that times are not what they once were here. The days of an ounce a visit are gone long since. He gets along however; he has a party at work on the diggings, to whom he has supplied all the materials, and with whom he enjoys an equal *pro rata* share of the proceeds. An Esculapian brother next door but three has not yet adventured into the diggings' department; but by the razor's edge of an idea, he has associated lemonade

and soda water with the dignities of surgery and physic, and he too is driving an excellent trade.

Amidst flour stores and general stores, lodging-houses with "accommodation for man and beast," newspaper agencies, &c., with an occasional interval of grass and open country, we pursued our way for four miles to the commissioners' encampment, the site of the proposed township of Castlemaine, where the acting chief commissioner, Mr Thomson, received us very hospitably, and forthwith ushered us into the mess-room, where the official staff were engaged at dinner.

The Forest Creek diggings extend about seven miles in length, and ramify in their breadth many adjacent valleys and creek-beds. Besides these diggings there are several others, in various directions around Mount Alexander, of which Friar's Creek is one of the most considerable. The Mount was situated about seven miles north-east from the commissioners' tents, and had a pleasant, open forest, and grassy appearance. The township of Castlemaine has been laid off here, and the diggers were anxiously waiting the opportunity of purchasing land. This is a natural ambition, and useful alike to the cause of good order and to the public finances. The government have been somewhat slow in adopting these plain views, partly, as they allege, from the want of competent surveyors, partly from apprehended

difficulties in connexion with the squatting interest under the "Orders in Council" regarding the waste lands, and also in no small degree from an antagonistic feeling on the part of the squatters, who have hitherto regarded with very inhospitable countenance the vulgar invasion of their aristocratic solitudes by the countless streams of the diggers.

If a Victoria colonist permits himself to launch into the squatting question, there is an end to every other subject. I shall not therefore adventure here upon this seductive ground.

In the good hope that the rudeness of existence around us might soon be ameliorated by the system of selling land near the mines, I proceeded to inspect the bustling scene before me. Just twelve months had elapsed since I had visited Ballarat, the first field of our regular and considerable gold-diggings. There I found seven thousand persons collected within a square mile of ground; and the incessant hum of a thousand small hand-cradles that lined both sides of the little winding stream, and tossed about the auriferous gravel, resembled at a distance the noise of some immense manufactory. Here there was in whole a far larger assemblage, but the people were more scattered, and but little noise now attended their operations, owing to certain improved adaptations. The primitive hand-cradle was no doubt still to be seen in great num-

bers, but better contrivances were generally adopted for washing with less labour and upon a larger scale.

Here was a party, for example, with a kind of wooden trough, into which, by a cut of a few yards, they introduced a small and constant stream of water. The trough had a slight inclination, and at the upper end, where the stream entered, one of the party was engaged in shovelling in the auriferous earth or gravel that had been previously carried down from the place of digging to the washing-place. Another, with the back of a spade, arrested and stirred up the earthy matter as it coursed down the trough. At the foot of the trough, the larger stones were separated and thrown away, and the remainder—the muddy water and small gravel—fell into a second receiver, placed about a foot underneath. The contents of this latter were finally transferred to a tin dish, where they were gradually washed out by successive applications of water, until at length only the little yellow specs and nuggets of gold remained at the bottom.

This party had been washing for about two hours and a-half of the morning when we accosted them; and as they were about to make the first clearing, we waited to see the result. At the bottom of the tin dish there might be between two and three ounces of gold. Besides this, however, the

first trough which was constructed with several cross bars calculated to arrest the gold particles in their descent, contained also some little quantity, which it was not necessary to clear out very carefully until the end of the day. This might make above an ounce more. The party, apparently four in number, appeared quite contented with this result, but not in any way moved as if by extraordinary luck, for without the slightest alteration of manner or expression, or the expenditure of a word on the subject, they resumed their labours. In reply to our congratulations, they remarked that considerable time and labour—and of course these are money at a high rate here—had been spent in sinking their pit and forming their washing-place.

Moonlight Flat was the place in greatest vogue at this time, and we therefore paid it a visit. The diggers here and at Bendigo are *recherché* as to names. There is Eagle Hawk Gully, a notable locality for the root of all evil; Beelzebub Flat, doubtless from some kindred character of the spirits dwelling and digging there; Peg Leg Gully, where a timber-toed digger contrived to hop into large treasures; New Chum Flat, which savours very much of flat new chums; and so forth.

Moonlight Flat, about a mile from the commissioners, was a rather busy scene, and the diggings, which in that locality penetrated to some depth

below the surface, had been very productive. This place was also acquiring some less creditable celebrity for lawlessness and outrage. The inadequate police protection at the diggings was a constant subject of dissatisfaction on the part of the diggers; and they complained that when the slow arm of the law had at length seized a criminal, the chances of his escape were about equal, in the accidents of his journey to town, for justice was frequently *minus* either the criminal or the witnesses.

The holding of frequent circuit courts at the gold-fields, a plan that is now in the contemplation of government, will materially remedy some present evils. Meanwhile, however, Judge Lynch may possibly step in before Judge Law, as public meetings have already been held on the gold-fields, for the purpose of organizing a Miners' Protection Association; and this M. P. Association—the abbreviated term made use of where time is too valuable for long phrases—has already opened a correspondence, somewhat laconic in its character, with the government.

As the diggers were getting into the habit of bringing their wives and families up to the diggings, partly for their own social comfort, and partly to avoid the expense, now growing quite enormous, of lodging and supporting them in town or elsewhere, great numbers of young children began to

appear upon the grounds, and as they had nothing to do, and were exposed to dangerous scenes and to every bad habit, it was deemed advisable to institute some system of schooling. The Victoria Board for National Education was at this time so engaged, and a meeting was held at Forest Creek on the subject, at the time of our visit. The National system, as distinguished from the Denominational, recommends itself for the gold-fields by its permitting the children of the different religious bodies to be educated together. The National system, as applied in this colony, is a modification of Lord Stanley's well-known Irish system. A public meeting, held on a Sunday afternoon, was well attended, and considerable subscriptions collected, some giving £10 and £20, or an ounce or two of gold, and the board engaging to pay the teacher a salary, in addition to school-fees, and to contribute moreover twice the amount of private subscription. The schools were to be conducted in large tents, which permitted of the master "bundling up" as occasion required, and following the steps of his migratory constituents. Three sites were marked out for the present, which would embrace the whole of the Forest Creek diggings; and an order for three suitable tents, three schoolmasters, and a ton weight of schoolbooks was forthwith despatched to town. The board's inspector and agent, who was upon the

grounds, contemplated an early extension of his operations to Bendigo.

At this meeting I fell in with an old friend, a clergyman of the Church of Scotland, who with his lady had been attracted to the spot by noticing the advertisements on the trees. They had arrived just a week before, encountering many difficulties by the way; for after reaching a shepherd's hut, forming an out-station of the Greenhills, they had to wait several weeks, in quarters very indifferent even to a bushman, for an opportunity for themselves and considerable baggage to get further. The weather had been wet and cold during this interval, and their hut was occasionally visited by bullock-drivers and other wayfarers, whose external man did not indicate the best or safest of society. They took everything, however, with the right philosophy, and were fortunately not molested in any way. The reverend gentleman had been preaching that day at Moonlight Flat to a large audience.

The government held out inducements to clergymen of the different persuasions to visit and reside upon the gold-fields, and in this instance there was an allowance of £300 a-year. We afterwards met several other ministers of religion who are resident here—namely, two of the Church of England and one Wesleyan, and no doubt there are Roman-catholic also. The latitudinarian character of our

Colonial Church system in regard to the State, would rather alarm the consciences of such of our home friends as are trained up in all the habits and prejudices of time-honoured church establishments.* The celebrated Church Act of New South Wales of 1836, continued by re-enactments until now, awards assistance to the different Christian denominations in some proportion to their numbers. The fund from which this assistance is paid is taken by act of parliament out of the general revenue, and placed at the disposal of the executive government of the colony. The spirit of the times has overlooked the restricted meaning of the words "Christian denominations," and a vote of the Sydney legislature, several years since, recommended an allowance for religious purposes to the Jews. The subject is evidently one that will grow into a question and quarrel about civil rights, to say nothing of difficulties under the religious aspect. As the whole amount of the bone of contention is only £6000, involving no wide-spread vested interests or dangers of change, a movement that has recently been made in the legislature for its entire abolition may possibly prove successful.*

The next morning we sauntered into the "police court," to see how our friend the new local magis-

* Further on (Chapter X.), we shall learn that this movement, after sharp debates, resulted in an increase of the state aid to £30,000.

trate acquitted himself. We noticed, with some excusable diminution of our reverential sense, that we were once more in our mess-quarters of the previous evening. However, as Rome was not finished in a day, so neither was Castlemaine nor the requirements of the gold-fields. We therefore solemnized our minds afresh, and looked on, while Mr Justice Shadforth administered the law.

There were two cases before the court. The first was one of horse-stealing, a very common crime, and one of the most vexatious character, from the facility of committing it, and the difficulty of check and discovery. To meet emergencies, it has been found necessary to hold all parties who are found in possession of stolen horses responsible to justice for the same, unless they can produce the person from whom they purchased, or allege to have purchased, and who in his turn is held to be the thief unless similarly relieved. In the present case, the prosecutor was not forthcoming and the man was of course sent about his business.

The other case was one of "sly grog-selling." For very obvious reasons no permission is given to sell upon the diggings any fermented or spirituous liquors. The occupation of the digger sorely tempts him after his day's labours, to hunt about for drink, and he has money to bid any price for it. The trade, therefore, is enormously profitable. But, on

the other hand, the risk is imminent, as the informer gets one-half of the £50 penalty. The practice is supposed to be very prevalent, and it is therefore rigorously punished. In the present case a disguised constable had asked for a bottle of brandy, and the price, one pound, had been accepted. The victimized defendant, a handsome respectable looking young man, made many excuses. He knew all the time it was a constable, and was not at first for taking the money until it was pressed upon him; and so forth. But all in vain with the inexorable justice, who had generally to listen to a similar tale in every case. "The sentence of the court is that you pay £50, or be confined in her Majesty's gaol," &c. &c. No sooner said than done; for out came a large bundle of notes, from which the trifle of £50 was promptly detached. On the insurance principle, this delinquent had probably cleared many fifties, ere he was called upon for the present loss.

Notwithstanding all the extent of sly grog-selling, the excessive use of spirits is greatly restricted by this vigilance. We reflected, with some satisfaction, that we had not noticed a single drunk man upon the diggings; and we learned afterwards that this sobriety, although not entirely without exceptions, was sufficiently general to have become quite a proverbial feature of the gold-fields.

We next went to inspect the post-office, where there was a small gathering of expecting diggers, a mail having arrived on the previous evening. We found a post-master and two assistants, who occupied between them two small tents, and were kept hard at work.

A considerably larger body, assembled around a tent close by, next attracted us. These were chiefly new arrivals, who were waiting for licenses. For the privilege of digging and searching for gold, the government charged 30s. per month, and these licenses were now producing an immense public revenue. The expenses, however, were quite in consonance. The gold discoveries give to Victoria revenues unprecedented in colonial annals; but they have at the same time increased her expenditure, and diminished the power or command of her pecuniary means. I am reminded that a carter lately charged me nine shillings for a load from the wharf to one extreme of Melbourne, the distance being within one mile! A pound sterling, that was wont to inspire some degree of reverence, as a personage of some influence in Australian society, has now sunk to a very fifth-rate individual in Victoria.

CHAPTER VIII.

BENDIGO GOLD-FIELDS.

Beauty of Scenery—Solitary Digging Parties—Approach to Bendigo—Commissioner's Hospitalities—Quarrels of Diggers—Digging Processes—Undermining and Tunnelling—Great Production from a Quartz Grit—Foreign Digging Parties—Dangers and Accidents of Digging Life—Graves at the Diggings—The Unrecorded Dead—Mode of Life—Official Quarters—Enormous Prices of Provisions—Females at the Diggings—Robberies—Political Discontents and Antagonisms—Return towards Melbourne—Pastoral Beauties—Squatting Hospitalities—Squatters' Troubles—The bright Side—Wool and Gold absorbing Topics—Fine Scenery and Mount Macedon Ranges—Fossil Bones of ancient Animals—Geological Speculations on the Past—Constancy of Marsupial Features in Ancient Australia—Difference now from colonizing Operations—Reach Kilmore—Adventures in the Dark—Bad Weather—Shocking Roads—A Newspaper and a comfortable Fireside.

THE distance between the Mount Alexander diggings and Bendigo, the two great gold-fields of Australia, or, more properly, of the world, is about thirty miles. These bush miles often prove of vexatious length; but in this instance the country for nearly the whole way was so beautiful, and the road so firm and good, that we were rather deceived into the opposite idea. We had here the characteristic scenery of Australia under its best

aspect. The country before and around us was one continued succession of hill and dale, covered plentifully with grass, and more or less open, but never crowded with trees. Even the considerable elevation of Mount Alexander and the line of hills continuous to the north partook of this character, exhibiting grass to the very summits, and dotted over with trees that nowhere concealed the subjacent verdure. Beautiful and commanding sites everywhere presented themselves on either side of the roadway; and as we speculated on the future of Victoria, the chateaux, the parks, and the picturesque cottages of hundreds of fortunate gold-diggers rose up before our imagination.

For some distance from the Forest Creek fields, the valley traversed by the Bendigo road exhibited in its lower levels the marks of prospecting and digging. Here and there might be seen a solitary tent or a dray encampment, where a party were trying their luck, being desirous of keeping by themselves, if anything worth staying for could be found, rather than adventuring among the promiscuous crowds assembled at the regular gold-fields. As we opened upon valleys running to the right and left, we saw there, too, the marks of isolated labours. Everywhere the country struck us as of the auriferous character. Where pieces of white quartz strewed the surface or protruded from be-

neath, indicative of larger masses, this gold-bearing character was at once assumed, for every one seems to have made up his mind that the Australian quartz is all auriferous, "more or less." The soil in this case is usually poor and scrubby. The gravelly surface is another auriferous indication, and characterizes also a better aspect of country. The third description of auriferous soil, that over which we now travelled, was where no gravel appeared on the surface, but where the colour of the soil, the description of the trees, the aspect of the grass, and other indications, were similar to what appear in the last instance. In these cases the gravel was usually present, but at greater depths below the surface, and the upper soil was consequently richer, which occasioned a finer aspect of country.

Approaching Bendigo, the scenery became more of a common-place order. A dusty aspect ahead, together with outskirting tents, and hobbled and tethered cattle and horses, indicated the vicinity of this celebrated locality. The appearance of Bendigo is decidedly more imposing, in a commercial and gold-seeking point of view, than that of Forest Creek. The scale of operations, past or present, seems larger. The stores and tents seemed more numerous; the roads were certainly broader and more beaten down with traffic. At Forest Creek

the diggings formed comparatively a strip of the valley; here the whole scene before us was one vast diggings.

Feeling somewhat appetized by our ride, we pressed on for the hospitalities of our friend Mr Commissioner Gilbert, whose quarters were a good mile from the entrance of this great city of Mammon. We found the commissioner's location prettily situated on a rising ground that commanded a view of part of the diggings, with the Bendigo Creek winding through a plain beneath. "The Tents," which is the common designation of the government quarters at the gold-fields, reminds one of the early times hereabouts when a squatting homestead went by the familiar designation of "The Huts." Stepping as far back into the primeval retreats of squatting as a very modern antiquity will permit, we reach the days of yet higher and more austere simplicities—the days of the pan and the pannikin, when the public feeling of the bush reprobated the profane luxuries of town-life, and when the squatter, after cooking his chop, made his tea in the identical frying-pan, and poured it into the pannikin—the sole components of his kitchen, and that kitchen the state apartment of the huts. The addition of the kettle to this greasy simplicity was soon ascertained, like the removal of the midden at Glenburnie, to be a decided im-

provement; and gradually as the daylight broke further in, other changes were effected, until the march of comfort and civilisation began to appear like a drawn battle between the rival modes of the town and the bush. The loaf bread and the china-ware finally defeated the damper and the pannikin, or have long since confined them to the range of the kitchen. Good houses kept pace with good furnishings, and the refinements at Ingliston and Mount Aiken have for years been as distinguished as the hospitalities.

In the afternoon we sallied forth, under the commissioner's guidance, to make observations. Our host was rather popular among the diggers,—an exception to the general rule, for antagonism between government and people appears to be the necessity of our colonial institutions. I attribute this great practical evil to the high powers—the Anti-British irresponsibilities of the Colonial Executive, and their double effect in these antagonisms, unduly alike to elevate the officials, and depress the standing and consideration of the people. John Bull, with overflowing pockets, is proverbially the most conservative of mortals, and the gold-fields seem quiet not in consequence but in spite of official supervision. The recent concession, on the part of the Home Government, of the gold revenue to the control of the local legislature, will no doubt have an effect in the right direction.

The commissioner occasionally identified himself with the community around him, by visiting the scenes of their labours, inquiring into their fortunes, and listening to their troubles and complaints. This had a wonderfully good effect. During our present progress, several persons accosted him on the subject of their "claims," by which are meant the holes or pits they have sunk for gold-seeking. These cases were generally of one sort; a party of diggers had sunk a pit to some depth, when they were arrested by some heavy rain that had filled up the cavity. They had then left the spot, and gone digging elsewhere. Meanwhile another party passing that way had observed the abandoned premises, and having made calculations of the case, had taken possession, pumped out the water, and now enjoyed the gold. The old proprietors, probably not very fortunate in their new location, now put in their claim for the other, which a good Providence, in conjunction with a party of brother-diggers, appeared to have kindly made ready for them. But such claims were always, and for obvious reasons, rejected.

The diggings here appeared to me on a more elaborate scale, and more indicative of arts and appliances than at Forest Creek. Tunnelling, for instance, was more common. On looking down a hole some twenty feet deep, frequently no object was observable beneath; but on adventuring a

loud halloo, a response would arise from the chambers of the solid deep, followed by an ochre-coloured figure emerging on hands and knees into the visible world. He bears, perhaps, a bucket-full of the ochreous earth or gravel, that gives the golden aspect to his person, and he is not disposed to make his appearance to your call until he has filled up his bucket, and so avoided for himself an extra series of movements, and the time thereby involved to the whole party.

We came upon a party of four who were excavating upon a more wholesale scale than was hitherto customary. They had cut out an oblong square of about 18 feet by 12, and with perpendicular sides had got down about six feet. At one corner they had gone somewhat deeper, having the usual impatience to touch the more auriferous beds, ever associated with deep digging; and at this part, just at the moment we came upon the party, the point of one of the picks had gone through into an empty space beneath. We found them greatly nonplused, and gazing with marked vexation and disappointment on the dark suspicious crevice that had just been exposed. They perfectly comprehended that diggers from adjacent pits had been there before them, and had, long ago perhaps, scooped out all the richer material for whose sake they had so elaborately commenced operations.

The question now was, after having done so much, should they go on in the hope either of some portion being still left, or of finding more by adventuring into a lower level? That important point we left them to decide for themselves.

This undermining system is now very common at Bendigo. I can scarcely say whether it is exactly legal or not for the digger, upon the strength of his allowance of eight feet square of surface, to spread his arms in every direction beneath, so soon as he gets beyond the commissioner's observation. There can be, of course, but little check to this encroachment, or interest on the part of any one to stop it, unless there are parties of other diggers in the near vicinity. Amusing stories are related in the form of undermining incidents. A digger will sometimes disappear altogether with a loud splash from beneath, and his astonished comrades will have to hoist him up out of a yard or two of water —the undermining rèliquiæ of a former party. The diggers are not perhaps very careful in ascertaining previous underminings, or it may be that the sufferers are new hands who have heard little of the system. It very often happens that the same heavy rains that left the water in the mine, may have broken down the sides of the old shaft, filled up the lateral borings, and so prevented the possibility of access or inspection to ascertain the case.

The diggings that indicated the most improved processes in these nascent arts were those of the "White Hills," so called from the quantities of dazzling white pipeclay or soft schist that was ejected from the pit in the progress of digging, and that now overspread the surface of the entire hill like a cap of snow. Our steps were promptly directed to this interesting quarter. We found the diggings penetrating to a depth of fifty feet perpendicular. Seeing a windlass at work over one of the pits, we made for the spot, and met a bucketful of the material as it reached the surface. This was a description of auriferous matter that I had never met with before. It consisted of a white quartz grit, between sand and small gravel, of very uniform appearance. It was evidently very auriferous, for the gold was quite visible to the eye, scattered in small particles throughout the grit. This was more particularly the case in portions that were discoloured of a reddish-brown, apparently from a mixture of iron.

Feeling some curiosity to explore so promising a mine, I adventured a descent by a rude ladder, consisting of a straight sapling with cross pieces for steps driven through the stem. "I guess it's twenty-five feet to the bottom," said a voice from below, in answer to our inquiry. We, of course, took the speaker for a Yankee, and so it proved. He had been tempted from the States by the gold news, had

recently arrived, and had joined three colonists in working this claim. Australia had no attractions for him, however, beyond its gold, which would detain him only a short year or two. There was no place like home.

At the foot of the pit, I found two men with lighted candles, who guided me into the side workings. These were entered most easily upon all fours; for the auriferous stratum being quite thin, no more of other material was excavated than was absolutely necessary. The first circumstance that drew my attention was a draft of air that played upon our faces, and deflected the candle-flame as we crawled onwards. I then learned that the tunnelling was continuous over the entire hill, the claimants and their claims having repeatedly encountered and run into each other. A system of under-propping by posts was also in operation, to prevent any subsidence of the upper beds.

The auriferous grit I have alluded to was a distinct bed of between one and two inches in thickness, of a dull grayish white colour in the upper part, the lower being uniformly, as far as my observation went, of the reddish-brown hue already alluded to. Above this stratum was a thick bed of large stones and boulders of pure white quartz, embedded in gravel, or grit, or still minuter material; all being apparently derived from the same sub-

stance, the original quartz mass. This bed seemed to merge upwards into gravel of the usual colour, but of irregularly-sized pieces, and one part of the formation, situated about half-way up the pit, opposed great difficulties to the miners from the strength of its binding I had observed the same characteristics at the Ballarat gold-fields, as regarded this iron binding, on which many a pick was rung and broken. Between this part and the summit was an ochre-coloured clay, sometimes interspersed with gravel of the ordinary characteristics.

The stratum beneath the auriferous grit was the famous and universal pipeclay, which appears almost everywhere in this colony, in some form or hue. This formation is a soft schist of the finest grain, with a texture like that of the most delicate satin. The colour was nearly pure white, the departure in shade being towards a satin gray The same formation appears to prevail in many other parts of the country. It is found at Ballarat under very similar circumstances to those that were now before us; and having there a slight bluish cast, it became the celebrated "blue clay" of October 1851, which turned the heads of all classes, and out of which both diggers and amateurs were reported to be picking small gold nuggets to their hearts' content, with the sole aid of a penknife. It is also met with beneath the site of Melbourne; and as

the surface there in many parts exhibits also a gravelly character, the auriferous conditions are certainly present, and the gold may yet be found much nearer to the worthy citizens than the localities, inaccessible to many of them, of Mount Alexander or Bendigo. This auriferous character continues for some miles north of the town, and is resumed at intervals still further on. In this direction, about sixteen miles from Melbourne, a small gold-diggings suddenly started into existence lately, and for a time as many as two to three hundred were at work, who were said to have averaged a fair result.

A few inches of the upper part of this pipeclay was taken out and washed with the auriferous grit, and about three feet of additional depth was cleared away to form a convenient passage for the diggers. Their account of the yield of this grit was to the effect, that a bucketful gave them between two and three ounces of gold after washing, and that a cartload would give nearly two pounds weight. I had no reason to doubt this statement. But in estimating the profits of the miners of the Whitehills, we must bear in mind the preliminary expenses of the excavations. We understood also that this extra rich hill, which it was admitted to be, was now nearly worked out, all that remained being comprehended in the claims of particular diggers. Under efficient appliances, how enormous might be the re-

wards from such gold-fields! It seems as though the stimulus of necessity and hard-earned gains were alone wanting here, and that we should collect more gold if it were not acquired so easily.

But what might there be below the pipeclay? This was a question asked by many a digger, but I never found any one who had succeeded in solving the problem. The bed was supposed to be of immense depth, and a mysterious possibility of countless gold lying beneath, seemed to weigh upon many minds. Some had adventured partially into its recesses, but the uncertainty or poverty of present results soon tired out their zeal. The pipeclay itself was not generally auriferous, although quantities of gold particles appeared to have insinuated themselves into its soft substance from the superincumbent quartz or gravel. This was particularly the case at Ballarat, where the metal was found in crevices upon the surface of the bed, or met with in irregular veins of gold particles within a few feet beneath. On this account there was quite a rage at that locality to dive into the recesses of the pipeclay. One man, whom I there noticed, had gone down thirty feet from the surface, twenty of which was into the bed of this clay, but without any results either as to acquiring gold, or sounding the abysses of the stratum. As this formation had generally, in the accidents of time, been thrown

considerably off its original horizontal line of stratification, there was a good field for the services of the geologist, who might trace the cropping-out of the lower parts of the bed, and so save a long and perhaps useless labour to the digger.

The gold-fields are a scene pre-eminently calculated to exhibit the continuous powers of human bones and muscles, and a gold digger, working on his own account, is the personification of these powers. Few know what men can do, and how willingly they do it too, under an adequate stimulus. We gazed at laborious and incessant industry, which neither dazzling sun nor pelting rain could cause to intermit. A number of German mining parties were met with, which had been generally successful. Little accustomed even to see gold, much less to possess it in such abundance, the peasantry of the "Fatherland" roused their every energy, and we heard of labours in their pits and tunnels continued by torchlight during the night, as well as by light of day. We passed other foreign parties. Here and there a Swiss, a Frenchman, an American party, or a few Dutch sailors. A New Zealander might be distinguished; and we were amused at one spot by a whole party of Malays and Chinamen, who worked as laboriously for the root of all evil as any orderly Christian.

In these enthusiastic pursuits serious accidents

were frequent, from the impatience and negligence of all parties. In every locality of auriferous repute, the competing diggers thronged so thickly together, that very insufficient surface space was left for the ejected matter in sinking their pits. There was usually therefore around each pit a pile of gravel, earth, and stones, rising at a very unsafe angle directly from the edge of the excavation. The slightest disturbance above was ever rolling down a dangerous shower upon the heads of those below, and long lines of pits on either side of the narrow and devious roadways were exposed to additional danger from an incessant throng of trucks and wheelbarrows, carts of gravel, and waggons of provisions, horsemen and footmen, pressing backwards and forwards with equal impatience and negligence in their exciting vocation A blow on the head from a descending quartz nodule had become, therefore, as familiar, and nearly as harmless, to a sturdy digger, as the punch of an iron tree waddy upon the skull of an aboriginal lubra, whose noisy jealousy amongst her several rivals had disquieted the family wigwam, and worn out the patience of a common husband.

More serious injuries arose from the falling in of the sides of the pits, and particularly of the lateral borings, which were far too hastily and unmethodically executed. One serious and fatal accident was reported on the day of our visit,

and was of a peculiar character. A depth of about twelve feet in excavating a pit had brought the miners to some porous bed, through which the water began to ooze into the hole, threatening to render the claim useless. An experienced digger would most likely at this point have at once decided to abandon the place as hopeless. The party, however, determined to stick to their labours, and commenced "baling out." After a brief attempt, during which the increasing waters had by degrees undermined the pit, the sides began to fall in, and a stick was lowered in order to pull up one of the men who had remained below. This could not, however, be accomplished, although the influx of earth and water had as yet reached only to the knees. In great alarm, therefore, a rope was next procured, which gave the man a better hold. But this also proved in vain, and the immersion was now beyond the middle. Before any fastening could be effected on the person of the sufferer, the crisis was already at hand. He could not be extricated; and a harrowing spectacle awaited a surrounding crowd, who could scarcely credit the scene before them of a fellow-creature deliberately perishing almost within touch of a hundred able and anxious arms that were yet in the hurry of the moment, and in the absence of available apparatus, quite powerless for any succour.

In the midst of the busy crowd, and of the rest-

less upturning of the soil, we noticed a small spot of ground enclosed by a rustic fence, which, on our nearer approach, proved to be a grave. Who lay here, no one seemed to know or care. Before the discovery of gold in this colony, I read a rather affecting article in a Californian newspaper upon "The Unrecorded Dead," and little thought at that time that the cases there stated would so soon be our own. But such was now emphatically our case, and to an extent and character quite Californian. At the seabeach, by the highway-side, and scattered over the expanse of the gold-fields, were the graves of the unrecorded dead of our young Australia. We encountered in our walk a number of such graves. The deaths upon these grounds are, as might be expected, numerous; and frequently does it occur that there are not only no friends around the departing spirit, but there is no knowledge whatever of the party who is thus leaving his earthly remains to the last offices and sympathies of his fellow-men.

We varied our employments by making some inquiry into the mode of life at the diggings, and the expenses of living. A glance was sufficient to show us that the style of life was eminently primitive; such as must have entirely satisfied those enthusiastic minds that ever feel themselves trammelled and enervated by modern refinements. The

most conspicuous kind of mansion was the canvass tent, under every variety of form. Some of the domiciles were made of sheets of bark, with fire-places built of turf; but this description of dwelling ranked decidedly low even among the digging community. A few had built a rude stone house—truly very rude; and there were some stores or shops constructed of sawn boards, which must at great cost have come from town, and others of split slabs prepared upon the grounds.

The government quarters, or "the camp," as they were often called, consisted chiefly of small tents, each of which was occupied by one of the officers. These airy dwellings formed three sides of a square, the fourth side being the declivity of the hill. In the square were some little patches of garden, where we picked cress and lettuce, fresh with the dew of the morning. The mess-room was a large tent, open at one end. A rustic cottage-looking building, made of logs of trees, proved to be the Lock-up, and near it was a wooden house or office for the police magistrate. A guard, consisting of a few "pensioners," was on duty at different places, these persons being part of a considerable body of old soldiers who were lately sent out to these colonies by the Home Government, with certain allowances and privileges to aid their comfortable establishment in Australia. The reputed steadiness of the veteran had led to

his being thus invited to resume some of his old vocations.

Money seemed here of very small account. Expenses were enormous. Take, for instance, hay at £60 per ton, and oats at £3, 10s per bushel. The government officers usually found themselves underpaid. They were hiring labourers for the roads at from 10s to 17s 6d per day,—a rate of pay that in some instances exceeded their own But there was one advantage on the side of economy, that no one required to keep up any costly "appearance."

The prices of every thing seemed to be ever fluctuating Here was a noble field for the operations of a bold speculator Credit was all that he required, and a genius who had every thing to gain and nothing to lose might very promptly either make a noble spoon or spoil a very valuable horn But so perhaps thought also the various storekeepers, and not wishing to come in for only the dark side of dame Fortune, they were never in the habit of selling except for cash The staple commodity is flour, which at the time of our visit was worth about £12 per bag of 200 pounds weight. A fortnight before, it had been bought at £7; and now there were chances, particularly with overland carriers from Adelaide, of buying it at £9 or £10. A fortnight afterwards, it had risen to £15 and upwards.

We saw a considerable number of females on the grounds, and regarded their position as a very uncomfortable one. They generally kept to their rude domiciles, arranging their few comforts around them, and awaiting the evening's consolation, namely, an old glove, a pickle bottle, or a lucifer match-box, more or less occupied with the precious metal, and a weary and mud-bedaubed husband.

Amongst the good and industrious colonists upon these gold-fields, there were many bad. Numbers of old convicts from Van Diemen's Land haunted the diggings and their approaches. Robberies of tents and stores were somewhat frequent, and horses were perpetually disappearing. One kind of robbery peculiar to the gold-fields was carried on extensively, and particularly at night. This was the extracting of auriferous matter from holes that were known to be rich, or where some promising material had just been met with. These depredations were termed "fossicking," and as an invasion of gold-digging rights, they excited high indignation. There was generally some variance on the part of the diggers with adjacent squatters, whose pastoral stations had been overrun by the miners, and who exercised their legal right of impounding the sheep or cattle traversing their grounds without permission, *en route* for the butchers at the gold-fields.

The hardships of mining life exposed the diggers to be actuated by feelings of discontent, and that species of antagonism with regard to the government that I have already alluded to was ever an additional sore; but at the same time, the rich prizes they were hunting after, and the absorbing character of their vocation, had all a tendency to render human nature decidedly conservative These contrarieties furnished a field for popular orators, who often made violent speeches, and easily succeeded in passing any kind of resolutions at the public meetings. There would be an animated assemblage, eager participants in semi-rebellious projects, daring speeches and ferocious countenances; but within an hour every man would be once more at his absorbing business, peaceably rocking his cradle, or examining his trough for far brighter spots in his fortune than were to be found in an upset of the government, a declaration of independence, or any other operation that involved time, combination, and a cessation from gold-digging.

We now turned our horses' heads in the homeward direction towards Melbourne, our party being reduced to three, as one had left us at the Greenhills, and another at Forest Creek. Riding through several miles of diggings in a south-easterly direction, including Spring Gully, one of the celebrities

of the gold-fields, we at length emerged upon the unbroken sod, and refreshed our eyes with the pleasant change. Traces of prospecting and of solitary digging, however, recurred for some time, and most of the surrounding country had those auriferous characteristics I have already alluded to. The country was rich and beautiful with alternations of poor soil and indifferent scenery We crossed several running streams, and the river Campaspé, a considerable body of water at this place, pursued its course by our side in a northerly direction, through a rich grassy valley where the cattle were quietly browsing on either side, and everything bearing the appearance of peace, prosperity, and comfort to the happy souls who had retired to these delightful regions

But the troubles of the times, we were well aware, had reached the pastoral occupants of these bright hills and valleys as well as other people, and we were not unprepared for the reverse of the picture, when, towards evening, we made the homestead of a squatting friend of ours, and heard all his tale of troubles. We had hardly, indeed, seated our weary limbs, stiff with the day's exercise, when there was a report of horse-stealing going on at the far-end of the paddock, and we had all to turn out against the common enemy. Happily it was only a false alarm, and we willingly changed the scene

to a cool wine-cellar in our host's garden, where he brought out some excellent claret.

We admired the beauties of this locality. The river formed a protecting semicircle around the homestead and the large grass paddock connected with it. A quarter of a mile from the house was the wool-shed, a rude structure of slabs and bark, of considerable dimensions, and indispensable to every sheep station. There was a small garden full of flowers, young vine-trees, vegetables—many of them rank and gone to seed, and no end of weeds, running rampant over walk and border. All was indicative of the social struggle of the times, in which a taste for these beauties of the homestead was overborne by the scarcity of labouring hands, and the engrossing character of other pursuits.

These pursuits were connected with the great increase of demand for the products of the squatter occasioned by the influx of great masses of population into the interior. The gold-fields had done him great damage in some things. They had drawn off his servants, raised the prices of his necessaries by the high rates of carriage into the interior, and enormously increased the expenses of his establishment. But, on the other hand, he was supplying the miners with mutton at the rate of 20s. a-head for his sheep—a rate that most squatters had for years past consigned to the age of an

inaccessible Utopia. Horses, too, would bring, in common parlance, any price that was asked; and as the diggers must have the variety of beef, the fat cattle had advanced as well as the sheep.

Other chances were ever occurring, to keep the squatter restlessly on the alert, and introduce him, even in his quiet and remote retreat, to some of the anxieties of mercantile life. A dray, loaded with flour for the diggings, for example, would be reported as stuck in the mud at "the crossing-place." The carrier is taking up the goods on his own account, and disgusted with the troubles of his journey, he offers the lot at half its value under a fair estimate for carriage The squatter's stock needs replenishing; or he buys on speculation, passing an order for the price upon his merchant in town; and when a week or two of additional sunshine have improved the said crossing-place, the journey of the flour is resumed upon his own dray, and what a Yankee would call a smart transaction is accomplished

The squatters in the vicinity of the gold-fields usually realize a good income by depasturing the diggers' horses in their paddocks, for which the customary charge is, I believe, five shillings each per week, but without responsibility should the horses disappear. Horse-stealing is incessant, and amounts to an enormous evil. Parties representing

themselves as agents for the diggers will often attempt to clear out a whole paddock, and, notwithstanding all risks, they soon find willing purchasers, "at a price," all over the diggings.

In other respects, however, a gold-field upon a sheep-run is a very dangerous nuisance in the eyes of the squatter. To say nothing of the risk to life and property arising from the lawless characters frequenting such a scene, there is the danger to the sheep from diseased ground upon and around the gold-fields. The infectious disease called scab is always present in these busy scenes. Notwithstanding the presence of this disease in a sheep, the animal is often fat and of goodly aspect, the malady, apparently, at least in the earlier stages, being not beyond the skin. For these doubtfully conditioned animals, the diggings and their hungry population are generally a standing market, and as the ground traversed by scabby sheep retains for long afterwards the infecting qualities, it may be supposed that the gold-fields are never free from this disease.

The squatters therefore carry on a defensive war against the inroads of those sheep. They are still more particular that sheep once upon the diggings shall not be permitted to return, as this would be infection upon infection without end. Having the law in their own hands under their pastoral rights, they generally turn it to account in another way,

namely, by compelling those bringing live-stock for salè to the diggings to dispose of the lots to themselves in the first instance, the squatter afterwards re-selling to the diggers at some advance.

Although agitation and party feeling are thus already at work regarding squatting privileges and mining annoyances, all classes are, nevertheless, happily connected with each other in bonds of mutual dependence Each of the colonial interests is now necessary to the well-doing and even the existence of the other The digger vows a milder vengeance upon the monopolizing squatter, as he clenches his teeth upon the savoury mutton arrived the previous day from a pastoral station; and the squatter himself, who feels in his pocket the pleasant weight of a pound a-head for the last wethers sold at Bendigo (nearly double the anti-diggings' rates), is tempted to think that both diggers and other colonists, even although disputing the Magna Charta of his "orders," are not after all those constant enemies of law and order, of gods and men, for which, in depressing moments of lower prices and fuller markets, he had sometimes mistaken them.

We got into an amicable argument upon the squatting regulations. It was impossible to quarrel over our host's own plentiful table. As the good lady of the house was absent on a visit to Melbourne, the

commercial topics of the day had the full round of our time. In the bush the staple topics are wool, the squatting prospects, and the squatting regulations and orders in council Is the wool to be in the grease this season for want of hands to wash it? What the price? What the freight home? What prices are the merchants giving this season? and so forth. In like manner in town, when the ladies are absent or have retired from table, the present topic is the gold—its quantity, its price, its permanence as a production of the country, its effects; and like Aaron's rod or the great sea-serpent, it swallows up all rivals. The ladies, although evidently desirous of appearing shocked with such mercenary manners, are occasionally tempted, like Mrs Caudle before them, in the case of the Eel Pie Island railway stock, to inquire of their husbands on an evening how much they have secured of it for the day's labours. The subject is thus dignified by a domestic tendency. The Sydney ladies are said to have gone, by aid of long experience, considerably further; for, in attending diligently to the relations of cause and effect in the wool market, they had ascertained that, on a broker's report showing a penny per lb. of advance in price, an extra horse to the carriage was quite an attainable affair from a husband of average humanity.

A short ride over a shocking road and through

a poor country, brought us by degrees into more promising scenery. After ten or twelve miles we descended from an eminence, whence we had enjoyed a noble view to the far east and west, with glimpses to the south, obstructed by the Mount Macedon ranges that lay in picturesque variety before us. We crossed a pretty streamlet, running over a grassy flat, and entered upon a fine open country, varied with hill and dale, and patches of forest, forming one of the many magnificent pastoral stations of this colony. A homestead appeared on the long and gentle slope of a green hill at some distance to the right of our road, and had time permitted, we might have visited some brother colonist in his pleasant retreat, and spent an agreeable day in inspecting his pastoral principality, and the numerous and devoted subjects over whom he reigned.

The Mount Macedon ranges beyond this station are remarkable for the discovery, about eight years ago, of large quantities of the bones of animals, generally of extinct species, and indicative of a scale of dimensions such as is not now met with. The late Dr Hobson, one of our most eminent local practitioners, interested himself greatly in these remains on the occasion of their discovery, and forwarded various specimens for examination to Professor Owen. The observations of the professor and of

other scientific men are most interesting and curious. They tend to show that in former times Australia, in common with other countries, was occupied by huge animals resembling in some respects those now in existence, but far surpassing in dimensions their congeners who have succeeded them, and now occupy in our own day their respective localities. When the geologist has brought together the osseous fragments of these ranges, when the comparative anatomist has supplied the deficient links to the skeleton, we are initiated into the surprising picture of the past. *Emūs* sixteen feet high perambulated the plains of ancient Australia; kangaroos of the dimensions of an elephant bounded through the open forest; and several other huge animals that embodied the joint qualities of the elephant, the tapir, and the kangaroo, exhibited curious and unexpected instances of the connexion and association of characteristics, hitherto separate and distinct in the individuals of the animal world.

But the most remarkable feature of these ancient animals, or rather of the quadrupedal proportion of them, is the marsupial character that is found to pertain to them all. The researches of comparative anatomy seem to have assured us on this point. It is remarkable in the present day that all the indigenous quadrupeds of this country are of the marsupial type; that is to say, all the fe-

males have the pouch-like apparatus for the reception of their offspring, who are born in an imperfect condition of development as compared with the young of other quadrupeds. The dingo, or native dog, is the only exception to this rule—an apparent exception only, as would probably be found if the Australian history of this animal could be traced backwards into earlier ages For it seems most likely that some accidents in the rovings of our fellow-men in past times, have occasioned the introduction of this their most constant companion into the seclusions of Australia, where he has since made good his footing throughout the country, and assumed, from similarity of habits and circumstances, during a lapse of time, that uniformity of colour and aspect that experience has shown in other instances to be the result of a departure from the domesticated into the wild condition of life

Viewing the marsupial indication as one of inferiority—a link between the viviparous and the inferior oviparous or egg-bearing animals, the constancy with which this character appertained to Australia throughout a long lapse of time is suggestive of interesting speculation on the history of the past. The isolation of this great territory, flung aside, as it were, from the mass of the terrestrial globe, has preserved from admixture its curious in-

digenous races. Australia seems to have always been the great headquarters of animals of a peculiarly distinct family, of which but a few members only are found in other parts of the globe. There may also have prevailed through a long antiquity a climate and aspect of country similar to the present; where the Notatherium or monster of the south of ancient days, basked in the bright Australian sunshine, and the colossal kangaroo and the lofty emu of these times, like their dwarfed successors of to-day, gambolled in their fantastic gait over the grass-clad surface of the same Australia.

There were no altering or translating agencies of civilized man in these times of mysterious creative purpose,—agencies that are now surmounting every obstacle of distance, and making universal, in numberless cases, that distribution of organized beings which nature has been wont to restrict with a surprising constancy to particular regions. We may, indeed, well reflect what sad confusion our modern colonization is preparing for the speculations of the future geologist. Glancing to the year 5000, or through a geological era that far overshadows even this grasp of time, the prevailing geological characteristics of Australia may then have entirely changed. Instead of the marsupial quadrupeds and stilt-legged wingless birds, the bullock and the homely sheep will then predominate

in representing the past world. The shank of an emu, the trophy of some hunt, dug from a pyramid of bones at an ancient tallow-making establishment; a solitary dingo skull, with a round perforation without and a perplexing fragment of lead within; the joints of a kangaroo tail, which has regaled some extinct squatter with the proverbial soup; —these are all possibly riddles in store for the *savants* of a future age.*

A long day's journey of about fifty miles, brought us to the outskirts of the inland township of Kilmore, just as the daylight began to disappear. Getting our directions at cottage-doors by the way, we steered tolerably well along fences and across swamps and creeks while any twilight remained to us. But as night closed in, we had some doubts of our powers of locality; and after several ups and downs, and some sad bogging of our horses on what appeared to be a soft continuation of a road, we

* Not only the fossil geology, but the whole department of natural history in Victoria, comprising a boundless field, particularly in the mineral productions, has scarcely as yet been entered upon by scientific minds. Count Strzelecki has illustrated some of the eastern parts; and the present governor Mr Latrobe, an indefatigable traveller and an intelligent naturalist, has examined the products in some departments in repeated explorations throughout most of the colony. But there is still a wide and untouched field, filled with riches alike to science and to commerce. A colonial naturalist just expected in the colony, and a museum of Economic Geology recently ordered from Britain, must have a stimulative effect in this interesting and useful branch of science.

decidedly pulled up at a little cottage, in order to get fresh bearings.

Our call was responded to by a female, who in a long story, of the most excruciating Irish, only a small part of which, as she coursed rapidly through, we could translate into the Queen's English, related all the outs and ins of a very complicated path to the township, distant three miles or less. This latter announcement was rather staggering as regarded our tired horses. Having refreshed ourselves with a drink of milk, proffered to us with a ready hospitality, we resumed our march. We descended into a creek, crossed through the mud at a tree, according to instructions, and were ascending on the opposite bank, when one of our party suggested some doubts as to his having understood the directions. The subject of difference was, with reference to a certain fence now before us, whether we should go along the fence or not go along. Not being able to agree on this important point, we made for a second cottage not far from us. Here a daughter of Erin again saluted our ears, and that too with the same excoriating tongue as her sister over the way, notwithstanding our gentler anticipations from a contented, ruddy, and comely face. As she talked of our keeping close by the "finnce," we could almost have sworn, by the testimony of our ears, to her cutting off the ends of the words with a razor.

The Irish have taken in great numbers to Kilmore and its neighbourhood, and form, I understand, a thriving community.

Notwithstanding all our repeated and stunning instructions, we contrived to lose our way several times over But at length, with a bribe of a pound and a nobbler of brandy, we induced a cottager to turn out, who after a two miles' tramp, landed us safely at the Dunrobin Castle Inn at a rather late hour

The next morning was fine as before We had been remarkably favoured in weather, and were now but forty miles from Melbourne, which we intended making that day Kilmore, although very scattered, seemed to have a considerable population —probably between 2000 and 3000 in the parts that came under our notice It is a "private township," and is spread over a "Special Survey," or oblong square, comprising eight square miles, or 5120 acres of land Opposite to our inn was a steam flour-mill, then busily at work The country round had an agricultural and quite an English appearance, but for the large proportion of wooden houses. The streets were shocking; but several men were now at work upon them,—the honourable member for the Kilmore boroughs having succeeded in getting some public money for the purpose, greatly to the satisfaction of his constituents.

Our journey was without incident till we came to the pretty rise called the Big Hill, which I believe is an extinct volcano, like many other hills of this colony. Here we were at the source of the Merri Creek, one of the tributaries of the river Yarra, and we soon afterwards found ourselves wading through an extensive swamp. We were endeavouring to follow the main Sydney road which had plunged before us into this Slough of Despond, and was not now visible—at least under the form of a road. Here and there were lines of marks where bullocks' feet and dray-wheels had ploughed the miry deep. We emerged with some exertion upon a beautiful grassy knoll, where a flock of sheep were enjoying the luxuriant pasturage. Long tracts of this part of the Sydney road are proverbially execrable, but as the country is flat and adapted for railway operations, no doubt a good time is coming.

The weather now threatened to change, and when we had got about half-way home, a heavy rain set in that soon wet us to the skin. The country, with nearly a week of dry weather, was beginning to dry up; but now all was undone, and some parts of our Sydney road made a near approach to the appearance of a respectable canal. We were thankful the rain had not come sooner. Comfortable at our respective homes, and firesides, we were soon im-

mersed in the latest newspapers, ascertaining the arrivals from Britain, and the further effects of our gold discoveries upon our adventurous and emigration-disposed fellow-countrymen.

CHAPTER IX.

COLONIAL POLITICS.

Subject indistinct to Home Readers—Two leading Principles in Colonial Administration—The Nominee and Guarantee Systems—Illustrations—Colonists ever dissatisfied with these Political Relations—Of Colonies essentially British, as distinguished from others—Australia of this Class—Home Concessions to the increasing Importance of Colonies—Want of political Unanimity in Colonies, and bad Effects of previous Systems—Efforts at Port Phillip for a separate Government—Review of the Separation Contest—Opposition of Sydney—Mode of Accomplishment—Australian Colonies Bill of 1849—Impatience for Separation at Port Phillip—Proceedings of the Colonists—Earl Grey elected Member for Melbourne—£10 Franchise—Franchise to Squatters—Political Parties at Sydney—Discussion on Electoral Distribution—Electoral Inequalities of the New South Wales and Victoria Legislature.

To home readers colonial politics are not a very distinct subject. Unaware of the precise grievances, it appears to them that their emigrating countrymen become methodically turbulent so soon as they leave their paternal homes; and that, too, under those ameliorations of outward condition that usually attend the emigrant in his new sphere—circumstances that have always had a contrary tendency in the political world when experienced in the mother-country.

Our colonial administration has grown up under the prevailing influence of two principles. The first of these concerns the general system of crown-nomination—a system that proceeded naturally, we may suppose, from the monarchical form of the Home Government. The second is the guarantee system, which is brought into operation when any step is conceded to the colonies in the direction of liberty—a system having its origin in the remains of old political feelings and maxims that ever represented the relations as necessarily antagonistic between the government and the governed, who, like the disciplinarian schoolmaster and his boys, were instinctively regarding each other with incurable distrust, and, on one side or on both, with considerable aversion.

In illustration of this latter principle may be mentioned the "schedule system," by which, when some kind of free constitution is given to a colony, the Home Government still retains under its sole control, or that of its representative in the colony, what is termed a "Civil List," or a permanent provision for the chief offices of the local government, out of the proceeds of the "taxes, duties, rates, and imposts," that are in other respects held at the disposal of the representative legislature. The object of this arrangement was to guarantee permanently a sufficient remuneration to these

offices, filled up as they usually were by appointments from home, and also to enable the local administration to carry on the government, notwithstanding any difference with the people.

Another illustration of the guarantee system is the proportion of crown nominees still retained in the representative assemblies given to colonies, usually to the extent of one-third of the whole number; or, failing this arrangement, another, which places the check upon the assembly in an upper house of nominees.

With regard also to money bills for the appropriation of the public revenue, the initiatory step can in no case whatever be taken by the legislature, but must emanate from the executive administration, even with regard to the proportion of that revenue that has been placed at the disposal of the assembly. Thus restricted in regard to funds constitutionally their own, it may be supposed that the colonists were not to be readily intrusted with the administration of the public lands, or with the expenditure of the revenue derived from this source. Accordingly the regulations with regard to these lands, and the expenditure of the funds derived from their sale or occupation, were ever a carefully guarded prerogative of the colonial executive.

The British people, transferred to the new scene of colonial life, do not coincide with these political

aspects. Busy and prosperous, a conservative tendency that naturally arises restrains the body of the colonists from ever contemplating actual outbreak; but, in other respects, the independence of their circumstances has only increased their sense of political rights. There are no rebellious thoughts now-a-days in thoroughly British colonies;* but a constant irritation is maintained between the people and their authorities, who are thus bound the one to the other by such slender sympathies and ties.

The domain of the British colonies comprehends at the present day a very varied picture of human society. Some of these places are mere military stations formed amidst a foreign population, where among the body of the people there is no natural tie to the Imperial Government. Others are more or less mixed with this population, as in the case of Canada and the Cape Colony, where the tie is consequently weakened, and where the usual efforts for liberty have been attended with some harsher features than are witnessed in colonies more entirely British. Others again are situated in tropical regions, where the mass of the people consists of an inferior race incapable of free institutions, and where in this and in other respects the circumstances are

* One feels, however, that the gold discoveries have introduced new and less certain elements in colonial politics—elements certainly not to be quieted under present political systems, and demanding grave consideration under any system.

unfavourable to the development of the British race. The colonies to which my remarks of a political bearing apply are those which are thoroughly British in the great body of their population; in their sentiments, in the common tie of British origin, and in the climate and vocations of the new sphere. Such are the Australian colonies, and particularly that one of the group which is the subject of this work.

The remote position and comparative unimportance of the colonies, until within recent periods, deprived them of all influence for effectually accomplishing their own liberties. In these respects, however, their position has now materially altered. The agency of steam is rapidly diminishing distance, and the attention now bestowed upon Australia is a happy illustration of the increased consequence of colonial subjects.

These altered circumstances have produced of late a favourable effect upon the Home Government, which we see remarkably exemplified in the political emancipations of the North American colonies. The earlier stages of this manifestation were displayed as regards Australia in an officious desire to meet the colonists' views by imperial legislation. Colonial constitution bills were dragged through thin houses, who balanced a supposed necessity and sense of duty against very tedious and uninteresting labours. But an over-anxious parent had

acquired a habit of prescribing for only very young children, and was ever in the rear as to the extent and nature of her gifts.

But within the last few years there has been a better habit of inviting the Australian colonists to suggest their own views to the Home Government; and there is already a near prospect of the next and final step, in the proposal of the home authorities, now under discussion in Australia, to leave to the colonists all the cares of their own legislation. This disposition has particularly characterized the present and preceding colonial administrations, which, however differing from each other in their home politics, have agreed in a happy liberality towards the colonies.

The recent concessions in the case of Australia, with regard to the Crown Land revenues and administration, affords an agreeable illustration of the final abandonment of old political prejudices. The first step in this important proceeding was the concession of the "Gold revenue," on which a variance had arisen, both in New South Wales and Victoria, between the respective legislatures of these colonies and the local executive governments, in consequence of the latter having, by aid of the proverbial facilities of legal interpretation, claimed the fund in question as a droit of the crown. This fund was at once conceded to the legislature by the Home Office;

and the further concessions, involving the whole question of the public lands, are at this moment the subject of arrangement with these colonies. The proceedings of the last two years give promise that many more will not elapse ere all cause of discontent will have ceased between Britain and that highest class of her dependencies to which I now allude.

But a great difficulty now with these colonies which have grown up under the old system is to find unanimity of political views, so as to take full and prompt advantage of these favourable opportunities. The want of a habit of self-government, implanted from earlier stages of their career, becomes now conspicuous; and the system of home legislation has been injurious not only in its unsuitable character, but in depriving the colonists of a wholesome and necessary exercise which would have brought the public mind to a more definite and united bearing than that which at present characterizes the department of colonial politics.

The political condition into which our colonies usually lapse under the nomination system, as opposed to that of free institutions, may be thus described. The local governments are invested with very absolute powers, and are quite irresponsible, in any practical and usual meaning of the term, to the community around them, who are placed in

the position of receiving as by favour what they feel and demand as a right. These local authorities, sustained by an external power that is not to be questioned, are naturally little susceptible to any kind of local opinion, of which they feel themselves so entirely independent; and as the small cabinets of commencing colonies may not be expected to comprise persons of very large views, these are the more promptly at variance with the colonial public.

Two parties soon appear in the colony. One of these gathers itself around the official staff, and is distinguished for a Tory or anti-popular feeling, while the other instinctively lapses into extreme views of an opposite character. In the first party rests all political power and local patronage, and it has also the incontestable advantage of being at the head of fashionable life. The second, which comprises a much larger mass of population, has usually all or the chief portion of the local press. These parties are ever at variance, to the disturbance of the quieter portion of the community, who, having sympathies to some extent with the one or the other, are nevertheless opposed to the extremes of both. The government party, having all local power and the ear of the Home Office, has of course every advantage in the conflict; while its democratic antagonists console themselves by a plentiful shower of the only weapons they find available or satisfy-

ing, those, namely, of abuse and ridicule, for which our colonies in their press and other public demonstrations have become somewhat proverbial.

A harsh and disunited aspect thus attends political progress, surrounding it with difficulties and annoyances. The government party, unless in the exceptionary accidents of individual character, acquires an instinctive feeling against popular principles. A distrust which thus arises towards popular liberty is not unlikely to exhibit itself injuriously, and to exhibit a bias in the mode of carrying out even the imperial concessions to the colonies. For example, on the occasion of granting representative institutions, the political effect depends chiefly upon the mode of carrying out the electoral distribution among the people, and the arrangements for this purpose are entirely in the hands of the local government, which is intrusted with the introduction of a system that it is probably averse to, and that is destined to modify or supersede its own.

The object here, therefore, is to secure a continuance of conservative action in colonial affairs, or, in other words, to retain the dominancy of the old party. This may be accomplished by some mode of restricting the electoral powers of the people, by giving, for example, a short representation to the denser populations, where political opinion is most influential and decided, and throw-

ing an undue proportion among the smaller or more scattered bodies of the colonists, whose political sentiments may have a more indifferent character. The apprehensions of the Imperial Government have required one-third of nominees as a check upon the colonial assembly; but still greater apprehensions in the local government have required such further guarantees, by means of the electoral distribution, that the new assembly proves representative in little more than its indirect and moral effects, arising out of the opportunities of speech and the publicity of opinions. Such a legislature, it may be supposed, is ever liable to occasion misrepresentation abroad, dissatisfaction at home, and to diminish its own consideration by arriving at decisions upon important questions in opposition to the views of the body of the colonists

This political condition operates unfavourably upon the legislative character, by its tendency to sustain and promote the old political antagonisms, which might have otherwise subsided from the conscious possession of power and consideration on the part of the people. The elections for the deficient proportion of representatives permitted to the mass of the population, are now apt therefore to turn chiefly upon extreme political qualities in the candidates, to the sacrifice of other considerations. If an aristocratic party will domineer over the masses,

they in their turn will lapse into a defensive warfare of their own. Their representatives, legislative, municipal, and otherwise, will be restrictively selected as regards the whole body of society qualified for such honours. Competent education, personal status and character, are apt in the excitement of party feeling to be held at a cheap rate, and "a gentleman bred and born" to be regarded as a special object of avoidance. The representation of society is thus shorn of its due and fair proportions, and the popular cause is discredited by a vulgar or factious aspect, that is ever an argument with its antagonists—plausible at least, if not sound—for still maintaining in colonies that restrictive policy which is so fertile in rearing up party questions, and which has in reality been from the first the main cause of the mischief. In the arrangements that followed the late Australian Constitution Bill of 1850, the South Australian government introduced and carried a very equitable electoral arrangement. In New South Wales and Victoria, on the other hand, the representation has been made exceedingly unequal and anti-popular, and the representative system in these colonies has as yet accomplished but little in uniting parties and harmonizing political views.

This preliminary general view of colonial politics may serve to make the remainder of this and the

whole of the succeeding chapter more intelligible to the non-colonial reader, and perhaps impart a little more interest to a subject proverbially dry everywhere, as regards at least all countries and governments that are beyond our own homes and boundaries.

The Port Phillip colonists, whose district was, in the year 1851, separated from New South Wales and formed into the colony of Victoria, had previously participated in free institutions, in common with their fellow colonists of the latter colony, since the year 1843, under one representative legislature assembled at Sydney, to which the Port Phillip electorate contributed a certain proportion of members. This legislature superseded in that year a council of a purely nominee character; but the new assembly still retained, under the accustomed guarantee system, this nominee principle to the extent of one-third of its component members. It consisted of twelve nominees and twenty-four popular representatives, of which latter body the Southern District contributed six members

The distance between Sydney and Melbourne, the capitals of the respective districts of the colony, measured by a circuitous and rather difficult roadway, was about six hundred miles; and at the time now under consideration, a solitary weekly mail plied its way over this vast and silent waste, ac-

complishing the journey in about a week and a half. The communications by water were more rapid by the aid of steam, but they were also less regular, as the line in question was at that early period scarcely remunerative for this effective agency.

Under these unfavourable circumstances, the Port Phillip representation was not likely to give much satisfaction The scene of action was too far removed for the influence of local wants and representations There was also great personal inconvenience to the elected members In long established societies there is always a portion of the educated classes possessed of means and leisure, which, agreeably to themselves, they may devote to public purposes; but in new colonies all are in business, and the representative duties for Port Phillip in so remote a legislature, involved a serious sacrifice when undertaken by her resident colonists These parties therefore came forward sparingly, notwithstanding every encouragement from the willing electors. Three candidates only appeared at the outset, and the complement was reluctantly made good from residents at Sydney.

Melbourne and the country that surrounded it were then but a very small matter, as compared with Sydney and the longer established settlements of which it formed the centre. Even the Port Phillip colonists might possibly have been bound to admit this present inferiority. But their eyes

were ever upon the future, and time was the only enemy that in their view withheld from them a full equality of importance with their envied sister to the north But however this might be, that fair sister judged of the southern Cinderella just as she then appeared, divested wholly of the fairy mantle of the future, and perhaps she judged, with the customary bias of human nature, towards the side of her own pre-eminence Port Phillip therefore enjoyed a very limited consideration at Sydney, and her successive resident members generally resigned their troublesome posts after a brief endeavour to carry on the unequal war The practice of electing Sydney residents became gradually more common, and in some instances the southern province was fortunate in the status or abilities of its members; but it was ever a *sine qua non* in these foreign elections, that the honoured individuals should advocate a separation of the Port Phillip district from that of Sydney at the earliest possible moment

This disruptive movement was not popular in Sydney. That metropolis of the south, already large, elegant, picturesque, and bustling with commerce,* appeared to far greater advantage as she then stood, the capital of a great colony having a

* The population for 1846 was 37,000, for 1851, 44,000, besides about 10,000 in the suburbs. The numbers have considerably increased since the gold-discoveries.

southern wing so promising as Port Phillip. The connexion had also proved profitable in a more direct form; for the larger land revenues of the southern division had already brought to the Sydney district, under the free government emigration, a much greater share of British labouring population than the strictly local resources could have afforded; and each succeeding year gave some slice out of both branches of Port Phillip revenue to the uses of the older colony, by way of a surplus-fund unrequired, or at least unappropriated for the uses of the younger. Separation was therefore politically unfashionable at Sydney, and for those very reasons, political and general, that made it very much the reverse at Melbourne; so that the Port Phillip members who hailed from the former locality, plied their hesitating energies in the cause under considerable discouragement.

To one of this body, however, more earnest or more inventive in the cause than his honourable colleagues, is due the merit of devising a mode of drawing the attention of the Home Government to the question, and thereby accomplishing the desired object more promptly than it might otherwise have been attained. With the Home Authorities, individual statements from colonies, or even some considerable thunder of the public voice, are an insufficient advocacy for any important change. The

blows thus struck are graduated by time and distance, and finally inappreciable against the solidity of official routine. The great lever with those high dignitaries is the indication of a principle. A recommendation from the government, for example, or a resolution of the whole legislature, would have been such a principle. But, as regarded separation, neither of these aids could be had, for of the thirty members, both elective and nominee, for the northern section of the colony, only one had favoured the obnoxious project. The mode therefore adopted by the Rev. Dr Lang, the party now alluded to, who had been one of the original members for Port Phillip, was to draw up for the Home Government a fair statement of the case, which was signed, not indeed by all the council, but by all that part of it which represented Port Phillip. Here was a substantial principle, and it produced its effect accordingly

The question was referred from the Colonial Office to the Sydney Executive for a report, and the cause, having now some countenance at headquarters, began to make better way. The Executive took evidence and reported favourably, although not, it is said, unanimously, and the matter was once more with the Home Government. Here some further delay occurred, from the desire to incorporate in one measure both the Separation Act for

Port Phillip, and some steps in political liberty to the several Australian colonies.

Although the Port Phillip colonists would have greatly preferred the boon of their separation at once, and unencumbered with any occasion of delay, it must be confessed that for this latter addition to the projected act of parliament there was urgent requirement. South Australia, a colony essentially British, which, during an interval of eleven years, had risen to remarkable prosperity and importance, remained still under a purely nominee legislature —a condition that had begun to develop a disunited political spirit which threatened the harmony of the future. Van Diemen's Land, too, a more dubious groundwork certainly, as being the penal colony of the empire, had existed as a British settlement for upwards of forty years without representative institutions; and with regard to West Australia, which an existence of nearly twenty years had scarcely yet raised to any noticeable stature, it was deemed only just to give it the option of freedom so soon as its own revenues met its expenditure. There were also some popular concessions to be made to New South Wales and Victoria, over and above those which these localities had already enjoyed under the previous constitution of 1842-43.

The new constitution, however, proved a subject of long debate and difference. There seemed to be

great uncertainty in parliament as to what were the views of the colonists upon the question at issue—an uncertainty likely to continue unless these subjects be debated, for purposes of legislation, amongst the colonists themselves. Three sessions had passed with the Commons, and finally there was a further delay by some suggested alterations of an important character in the House of Lords. Meanwhile the Victorians, for so in anticipation they began to call themselves, had lost all patience. Their loud complaints as to appropriations of their revenues for Sydney purposes, and the obvious justice of the case, had already procured them financial separation. But great dissatisfaction was expressed at the delay of their promised independence, in consequence of those other bearings of the parliamentary measure in which, for the moment, they felt far less interested.

The elections for recurring vacancies in the Port Phillip representation had now become matters of very slender interest to the colonists, and Sydney residents were installed in their seats of honour without the trouble, on the part of the candidate, of even presenting himself at the hustings or the poll to his constituents. These convenient facilities suggested a plot which was intended to convey in unmistakable terms the appreciation at Port Phillip of the representative privileges the colonists then

enjoyed. It was very generally resolved that the vacancies should not be filled at all by colonists, but that the names of some of the high authorities of the Home Office should be proposed instead. And proposed they duly were accordingly, the Right Honourable Earl Grey, her Majesty's Secretary for the Colonies, appearing for the city of Melbourne, and, at a subsequent period, the Duke of Wellington and other notables, military and civil, for the country districts. The ambition of several residents to acquire an easily attained honour, defeated at the eleventh hour the manœuvres of the country party. But Earl Grey was already member for Melbourne in the New South Wales legislature; and when his lordship's new colonial status of the lesser degree was jocularly recognised in the House of Lords, and he had to plead, as was understood, a want of qualification in order to procure exemption from office, the colonists thought that their proceedings had not proved quite unsuccessful. On the occasion therefore of reluctantly parting with so high a representative, they expressed themselves indebted to his lordship for the service he had rendered to his constituents.*

* This proceeding appears to have given great scandal to the local authorities, who, reading in it a gross insult to their political chief, became, as in duty bound, zealous for the chastisement of so disloyal a populace. The Sydney government forthwith transferred the polling place for the district from Melbourne to Geelong, where the Duke of

The year 1850 put the colonists at length in possession of the Imperial measure, and the "Separation Session" was summoned for March of the following year. The old boundaries of the two districts were to continue the same for the two colonies, and the arrangements now to be made by the local legislature were chiefly as to the electoral distribution for each colony, and the number of members for the respective legislatures. The latter was a subject of very amicable arrangement as compared with the former. The total number for Victoria was fixed at thirty, and for New South Wales at forty-eight.

An important principle was involved in the electoral distribution. The "government party," which generally grows up under our colonial system as a something distinct, if not alien from the people, was, in part no doubt from the convict antecedents of the colony, unusually strong in New South Wales. The object of this party was to throw the representation chiefly among the thinner population of the country districts, in most of which localities the influence of the squatters was predominant, and

Wellington comedy was afterwards attempted; and the local superintendent on this account represented the colonists as still unfit for free institutions—a hasty inadvertency by a Briton regarding the spirit of his countrymen; for who that thought twice of such a frolic under the circumstances, would ever have associated it with disloyalty, disorder, or insult of any kind.

these parties, who were tenants of the crown, had now acquired the right of suffrage.

The question whether the squatters, as holding this position of apparently dubious independence, should participate in the franchise, had been variously debated in the colony. The squatters themselves were of course clear as to their own rights; but the other colonists also had generally agreed that common cause must be made at any risk with so important an interest, whose position arose from the natural circumstances of the country, and who, besides, had already, by right of custom with such a landlord, and by conformity to official public regulations, acquired a legal right to their lands, both as against other squatters and any unreasonable interference of the crown.* This debate was summarily adjusted by the House of Lords in their important amendment to the Australian Bill, by which, with the view of enfranchising the squatters

* That this was the position of the squatter prior to the Orders in Council (and I think it unfortunate both for him and the colony that any other was ever attempted) is clearly shown by the result of a trial at Melbourne, "Sprot v. Fyans," in 1845, where a squatter sued a crown land commissioner for having transferred a part of his land to a neighbouring squatter "without reasonable or probable cause." The defence was that this had not been done, and but for some indistinctness in the evidence for Sprot, who nevertheless gained his case, the commissioner would have suffered severely. The case is not one precisely in point although indirectly illustrative. It would have been more so had the commissioner issued the annual license minus the land in dispute, and the action been taken on that basis.

upon their £10 license-fee, and also of assimilating the home and colonial systems, they reduced the colonial qualification to this amount from its former rate of a £20 rental.

The legislature, which now sat to arrange for its two successors, comprised a strong conservative*

* The political parties in Australia have not yet any recognised names as at home; and I confess it is somewhat of a liberty to make use of this term *conservative*, which, in its home application, comprises a constitutional principle, but which is here transferred from a party whose tendencies are to *preserve* what has come down from a long ancestry, to one which, in a new sphere and upon clear ground, is endeavouring to *rear up* institutions opposed to the people and the age. The terms Exclusives and Democrats seem more applicable, in the usual meanings of words, to the two extreme parties. A proposition about this time that engaged some temporary consideration, namely, to make the Sydney electoral franchise a £50 rental, may illustrate the first term as well as the strong antagonism of parties. Thus cutting off the mass of the people from political rights, would have formed at least a new mode of meeting the political wants and discontent of a British population. The Sydney populace have, I confess, some turbulent characteristics, which are at least well baited, if they have not been entirely originated, by their political antagonists. At a public meeting, ostensibly for purposes of immigration, convened just prior to this legislative session, some violent speeches occasioned great confusion; and an allusion to the "stars and stripes" elicited cheers, which were subdued only by a recommendation that a flag of Australia's own should be unfurled if independence proved desirable. But we are not to expect at once from the convict antecedents of New South Wales the very highest qualities of a British people; and under this particular feature, some nominee precautions on the part of the Home Government, at the outset of free institutions ten years ago, were not without apology. The institution at that time of an equal representative system in other respects, might have saved much of the present divisive tendency, and have better prepared society for the necessary further progress. As matters now stand, a democratic section, forming

majority. Formed in 1843, upon a very unequal electoral constitution,* this body comprised also a large proportion of squatters, who, as influential and popular colonists, had at that time largely participated in public honours. The disputes on the squatting question, however, had since reduced their popularity, and in turn indisposed their own minds to the popular cause. The franchise to the squatters was barely tolerable to this majority in bringing along with it a democratic inundation of £10 voters. This effect of the measure occasioned some strong animadversions in the council, and in other respects on somewhat better grounds, the new Constitution Act, as it affected New South Wales,

a large mass of the people, have two political foes ever in array before them—the first and most aggravating being the exclusive party amongst themselves—the other, to whom they bear a much less antipathy, the remote enemy in Downing Street.

* The following was the distribution of the elective franchise of the first elective legislature of New South Wales:—

Districts.	No. of Electors.	No. of Members.
Sydney	2823	2
Melbourne	591	1
Cumberland County	1344	2
Camden	386	1
Northumberland	369	1
Durham	345	1
	5858	8
Eleven other Districts . . .	2619	16
Total	8477	24
Nominees	...	12
General total .		36

proved so unsatisfactory and unpalatable, that the measure would probably have been rejected altogether by a majority of the House but for the body of the Port Phillip members, whose primary object was separation, their other liberties for the moment occupying only the second place, and transferred in their minds to the scene of a future battlefield situated within their own boundaries.

The electoral scheme, now proposed by the government for the two colonies, was of the same unequal character as that which it was to supersede. To the city of Sydney, for example, with nearly one-fourth of the population of the colony, and perhaps a still larger share of property and intelligence, was to be allowed three representatives out of the thirty-two elective members; while representation was given to remote interior districts four or five times greater as compared with the ratio of population. In the case of Victoria, Melbourne, for instance, with between a third and a fourth of the entire population, got three elective members out of twenty, with which proportion, it may be supposed, the mass of her citizens were not over-satisfied; while the Loddon pastoral district, with ninety voters and sixteen hundred inhabitants, obtained its representative. The average at this time for each representative in Victoria was about 4000 colonists. It is often argued that where political inequalities

have long existed, there is a principle in maintaining them; but there seems no very admissible reason for commencing in a new sphere with a principle of inequality.

This question formed the chief point in a long preliminary discussion, in which the government views were advocated by about two-thirds of the council, a more equal electoral distribution being contended for by the remainder. Some sharp party scintillations were evolved in the debate. The liberals were charged with a disloyal republicanism; and the squatters jocularly complimented on the convenient character of their new voters, who, in the absence of human beings, were supposed to be the sheep and cattle of their pastoral domains. The inequalities of the British constitution formed the fundamental argument of the majority, and the short representation of London was pleaded for that of Sydney. To give greater conclusiveness to this argument, the Reform Act of 1832 was urged to have been a finality in regard to electoral change. Strange to say, this view of the case, so opposed to all British political experience, was doggedly maintained, refuted, and reasserted by long quotations and speeches; and it is still more remarkable, that at the very time when the representatives of the crown were carrying their point in New South Wales by such an argument, the First Minister

himself, as it afterwards appeared, was engaged at headquarters in devising a further and comprehensive reform, which, it may be said, only an accident had then frustrated, and which, every one feels, will not be much longer deferred.

After a few alterations, comparatively unimportant, the government propositions as to the electoral distribution for both colonies were adopted. The colonial press generally were opposed to the inequality of the scheme, but the mass of the people seemed little inclined to interfere—an indication either very good or very unfavourable. The Port Phillip colonists exhibited signs of more general opposition. The interval, however, between the publication of these propositions and their passing into law was too brief for any general public discussion, the entire separation session having lasted scarcely five weeks. Several petitions, expressive of dissatisfaction arrived from the south, but they were not extensively signed, and generally too late of appearing. To this it may be added, that the Port Phillip members were not themselves agreed in their views. Greater unanimity might have been secured as regarded both colonies by the step, which ought to have been taken, of a new election of the entire assembly for the special question connected with separation and the two contemplated new legislatures—a step, however, which

would doubtless have endangered the conservative policy.

I have dwelt at some length upon the initiation of the Victoria legislature. The electoral constitution which these northern accidents have given to the colony is probably important for the future —more so, indeed, than might at first be supposed, in consequence of the difficulty that may now be experienced in effecting an adjustment of these inequalities.

CHAPTER X.

LEGISLATION.

Port Phillip District erected into Colony of Victoria—Public Rejoicings—First Legislature of the Colony—Preliminary Arrangements to First Session—Principal Proceedings—Public Prayers—The Estimates—The Gold Question—Comparison with Sydney Legislature—Second Session—General and Constitutional Progress—Gold and Territorial Revenues—The Schedule System—State Aid to Religion—Debate on an Abolition or Increase—The Aid increased—Education—Rival Systems and Difficulties—Transportation Question—Colonial Tariffs—Squatting Question—Orders in Council *versus* Sales of the Public Lands—New Constitution—Two Legislative Chambers—Constitution of Upper House—The Governor's Appointment—Question of Colonial Nomination—Home Attachments of Colonists.

The first legislature of Victoria was assembled at Melbourne on the 11th day of November 1851. The elections had taken place in the preceding September, and had excited very considerable interest. The 1st of July previous had been the day appointed by the home authorities for the act taking effect for the separation of the Southern or Port Phillip District of New South Wales, and its erection into a distinct colony under the name of Victoria. On this occasion the superintendent of Port Phillip (as the head of the local administration had

been previously termed) assumed the title of Lieutenant-governor of Victoria.* The first levee of the governor, the swearing in of the new official staff, and a general procession of the people in honour of Victoria's Separation and Independence, were novelties that brought together considerable numbers of the colonists. A vacation of three successive holidays for the occasion was resolved on by general consent, and the happy Victorians, in a plentitude of present and prospective well-being, which displayed itself on every countenance, laboured to demonstrate their satisfaction at the final accomplishment of a long cherished object.

After some preliminary difficulty experienced in procuring and preparing a suitable edifice, the members of the new legislature were duly assembled for business. A speaker and a chairman of committees were appointed in proper form, and the days of meeting were fixed for Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, business commencing at three o'clock afternoon, in the hope of generally

* The title of governor is due only to the head of the government of the senior colony of New South Wales, who is usually termed, with regard to the Australian group, the Governor-general. This precedence of New South Wales, however, is rarely put into practice so as to interfere with the independence of any of the other colonies. In this respect, indeed, restrictions are specially imposed by home instructions. The intention regards merely emergencies. During any personal visit, however, to any of these colonies, the governor-general is actual governor for the time of his stay.

concluding the sitting at some reasonable hour of the evening. The Lieutenant-governor delivered his first speech in the midst of a considerable assemblage of local beauty and fashion, and took occasion to congratulate the House upon the great prospects that were opening out upon the colony by the late discovery of the Victoria gold fields.

This was emphatically true. In the preceding month of October, the produce of the Ballarat diggings had struck the colonists with astonishment; but towards the middle of November, at the time of this first assembling of the council, the proceedings at Ballarat had already been far surpassed by those around Mount Alexander, as now reported by the almost incredulous colonists, who, in the succeeding month, experienced the reality of all rumours in the spectacle of upwards of a ton weight of gold arriving in Melbourne by one of the weekly escorts. The colony had begun to attract a pre-eminent attention from its surrounding neighbours, and the assembled legislators took their seats under a self-satisfying assurance of the importance of their duties.

If we regard the importance to which the colony of Victoria has since so rapidly ascended during a brief interval of less than two years, some of the proceedings of her first legislature may not be considered uninteresting, and accordingly I shall review

several of the more prominent causes and contentions in which the new-born assembly became engaged.

Public Prayers.—One of the earliest subjects of the session was the consideration of a motion made by one of the members, to the effect that public prayers be offered up on each daily occasion of meeting. In the fortuitous assemblage (religiously considered) of a colonial legislature, where Catholic and Protestant, Jew and Gentile, may be alike collected, a motion of this sort was like a match applied to a bombshell. The prayer question was supported, however, by a strong party chiefly of the Church of England, including most of the nominee members. The prayer was proposed to be drawn up by a Committee of the House, and to be delivered by the Speaker. The subject was keenly debated, and excited also some attention out of doors .The Roman-catholic for his part denounced all prayers that were not delivered by a priest of his own church; and the Protestant, apprehensive of the incongruities of the case, deplored the needless invocation of religious discord, inseparable from this question in such an assembly. On the other hand were urged the usual and obvious arguments for an exercise in itself so appropriate and edifying. The motion was lost by one vote, and it has not since been repeated, notwithstanding the possibility of an opposite re-

sult. Both the legislature and the public have probably since agreed that this grave question has been better so settled by this one negative vote, than it would have been by a majority of one in its favour, or even any greater proportion.

Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure.—The chief consideration during this first legislative session was that of "the Estimates," or the official programme of the estimated revenue and expenditure for the succeeding year, in those departments which were under the control of the council. This first official budget was one of modest dimensions, the effects of the gold discoveries being as yet but little in comparison with subsequent experience. An accelerated progress, however, was already sensible. The revenue for 1851 had considerably exceeded the estimate made for it in the previous year, and the government now brought forward a "Supplementary Estimate" to make use of the available balance, calculated at about £20,000. In this account was included a variety of extra expenses occasioned indirectly throughout the public service by the gold discoveries. This was a point on which the assembly made a stand.

The Gold Question.—The executive had taken charge of the gold-fields from their first discovery as a branch of the general Crown Lands management, had appointed numerous paid officers, and

had enacted regulations as to escort and license-fees which began to produce a considerable revenue. The representatives conceived that duties of this kind, and revenues thus derived, belonged constitutionally to the legislature of a free people, notwithstanding that an opposite argument might be grounded upon the strict application of law to an unforeseen emergency. The executive, however, was not expected to be moved by this high and circuitous argument; and the council, gathering up all available powers, took its stand upon a principle, that the gold revenue should be made to defray every expense that the gold discoveries had occasioned to the country.

The representatives could not appropriate the gold revenue, or any part of it, for these additional expenses, which began to assume a formidable appearance in every department of the public service; but they intimated their intention of refusing to vote such extra charges out of the "Ordinary Revenue" that was under their care. Out of the gold revenue coming into its hands, the executive of course defrayed all expenses strictly pertaining to the administration of the gold-fields; but if a salary elsewhere had to be advanced fifty per cent., if a boatman's daily pay had to be made 8s. or 10s. instead of 5s., or a few thousands extra to be paid for police or other establishments, the

council would vote only the previous rates, leaving the executive to make good the difference from the ample fund of the gold and land revenue at its disposal.

In vain did the official members explain the clearness of the legal bearings of the case, and denounce the partiality of the view taken by the opposite benches, where allusion was made to the increase of expenditure caused everywhere by the gold, but not to the concurrent increase of wealth and commerce, and of the customs and other public revenues administered by the legislature. As the executive had pushed the law to its extreme, so would the representative body. Their course was perfectly legal, and it is unfortunately a course often necessary in the political warfare of colonial assemblies, although certainly a precarious position for a representative legislature in dealing with an irresponsible administration, to which it furnishes a plausible opportunity for injuriously restricting the public service.

The colonial factions of exclusive or democratic tendency are generally agreed in seeking for colonial self-government, however much their views may differ as to the internal political arrangements of the colony. Accordingly, the division on the gold question, as might have been expected, proved to be Representatives against Nom-

inees,* and the people carried the day by a majority of two-thirds.

Comparison with the Sydney Legislature.—In assuming this position, the Victoria legislature were guided by the example of that of Sydney, where a motion to the same effect was likewise affirmed by a nearly similar majority In a variety of procedure indeed, both in the executive and legislative departments of Victoria, the example of the senior colony served as a useful guide to the inexperience of her sister In point of senatorial qualities no comparison could for the present be instituted between the two assemblies. Perhaps the social and commercial cares of Victoria that supervened upon the discovery of the gold-fields prevented that considerable degree of attention to political subjects which they imperatively require The members, commonly speaking without adequate preparation, there were few attractive oratorical displays · and with a general desire to speak upon every subject, there was but little political concert so as to speak effectively upon any. The proceedings of the Sydney legislature, on the other hand, were characterized by able and eloquent debates, and by a better consistency and mutual understanding in political warfare.

* One nominee voted with the other side, but, as it afterwards appeared, under a misapprehension , one representative voted with the nominees.

In the Melbourne assembly, the want of these qualities was manifest in the course of the first question with the government, namely, that of the expenses caused by the gold. The popular majority, after holding together at the outset in the course of voting "the Estimates," soon began to exhibit symptoms of defection. The official members, possibly amused, returned again and again to the charge, notwithstanding that the principle had been already settled by a motion and vote at the first. Some of the popular majority had early seceded upon questions of wages and minor sums—matters uncertain as to the strict line, and apparently with these parties beneath the dignity of principles; and on several points a majority at length voted with the government. Thus a considerable extra item was agreed to for the post-office, the risk to the social necessities outweighing with the new legislators a mere political object.

A sufficiency of good temper was maintained by all parties, and perhaps enhanced by the circumstance of the inexperience common to both. The debate was happily adjusted by a promise from the governor, in accordance with example at Sydney on the same question, that the requisite services of the country would be maintained, and that, until further instructed by the Colonial Office, the extra expenses for which the council had refused to pro-

vide should be defrayed from the crown revenue. I have already, in an earlier paragraph of this chapter, alluded to the favourable response which was returned, or rather anticipated, by the Home Government on this question.

Second Session.—The second session of the legislature took place in the midst of the stirring and eventful progress that marked the year 1852. The general picture then furnished by the Estimates which had been prepared for the succeeding year, illustrates the extraordinary leap which the colony had made, even within the brief sessional interval. The estimate for the year 1852, of that portion of the total revenue constitutionally placed at the disposal of the legislative council, as submitted to that body by the executive during the previous year, amounted to £175,350; the estimated revenue for 1853, enhanced by the late crown-revenue concessions of the Home Government, to £1,733,600.

Constitutional Progress.—But this progress was not confined to mere financial and commercial considerations. It embraced also marked features in constitutional freedom, in consequence of the late extensive and rapidly succeeding concessions of the Home Government. The legislature met these advances in a becoming spirit. Although loudly complaining, as regarded the representative proportion, of an executive administration that was inadequate

to the crisis of the times, the House dispensed with a liberal hand to all branches of the public service those great revenues which both the progress of the colony and the concessions of the Home Government had placed under its charge. The following outline comprises the principal concessions and alterations here referred to

1. *The Customs.*—The department of the customs, by an antiquated practice, originally connected with the system of protective duties, was placed under the control of the Lords of the Treasury, or, practically speaking, of the local executive, as agent in the case for the Home Government, this latter authority claiming a general cognizance, and not unfrequently condescending to various special appointments even of a very moderate grade. This department, from 1st January 1853, was henceforth to be placed under control of the local legislature, and that body was now accordingly called upon to vote the scheme of expenditure in this as in other branches of the public service.

2. *Gold Revenues.*—The question of the gold revenue has already been alluded to, in connexion with the differences with the local government. The prompt concession of the entire fund transferred the administration of the gold-fields to the disposition of the assembly.

3. *Land Revenues.*—The Official Home Despatch,

then recently received, which conveyed this liberal view of the disposition of the gold revenue, alluded also to the desirableness of the legislative council exercising a voice in the appropriation of the large amounts of revenue derived from the sale of the crown lands. By act of parliament one moiety of these lands is set apart for purposes of emigration. But with regard to the other moiety, this hint from headquarters was promptly acted upon by the local executive, who accordingly on this occasion placed a sum, estimated to be about that proportion of the land revenue, namely, £300,000, at the disposal of the legislature.

4. *Schedule System relaxed.*—Shortly before this occasion, the Home Government had intimated a wish that these colonies should take into their own consideration the alterations that might be deemed beneficial in their political institutions; and a relaxation had taken place in the stringency of the "Schedules," which permitted of alterations by the legislature in the usual mode by acts of council sanctioned by the crown.

The first session had terminated on the 8th of January 1852, and the second resumed the legislative labours on the 22d of the following June. This session was one of unusual duration, the sphere of duties expanding with the impulses given to the colony by the gold-produce. The marvellous rates

of progress hitherto had warranted an estimate of the public revenue from all sources for the year 1853 at two millions sterling; and nearly the whole portion of this large amount, including the gold revenue, now one of the chief items, was placed at the disposal of the legislature.

"The Schedules," those precautionary Imperial reservations, were now wholly insufficient for those services which they were intended to guarantee from dependence upon popular representation. Not only were the salaries inadequate to the times, but it was necessary to extend and strengthen all the departments. Instead of one judge, for example, three were now necessary. The whole case was duly laid before the legislative body, which, with a creditable promptitude and unanimity voted the considerable additions that were called for. The salaries, generally speaking, were advanced fifty to one hundred per cent.

State Aid to Religion.—The Schedule system consists of three parts, two of which relate to the civil and judicial administration, including the governor, the judges, and the heads of chief departments, and the third to religion. The scheduled amount in aid of religion for Victoria, under the separation arrangements, had been fixed at £6000. This sum, in terms of a Colonial Church Act, some time in operation, was distributable among the different

sects of Christians, in aid of the voluntary contributions which in other respects now form the supporting principle of all religious denominations in the colony. The aid to religion for New South Wales had been fixed, on the occasion of the late constitutional changes, at £28,000, and the amount of £6000 for Victoria being deemed much too small under present prospects, it was increased to £30,000 by vote and address of the legislature.

This question, like every other in religion where the state is a party, was not carried without strong opposition, and some impression that the views of the legislature in the case did not entirely accord with those of the body of the public. The question is one somewhat curious and complicated to home readers. Such persons are either themselves members of church establishments, or from long habit and local association they have a tolerance of feeling for a system that has been handed down for centuries as the law and institution of the country. In the new sphere of a colony, where such modifying associations are nearly or entirely lost, these privileged inequalities are felt to be quite intolerable.

The penal condition of New South Wales in earlier times naturally repressed these usual tendencies in colonists, and permitted the growth of a Church of England supremacy. But the extension of the colony suggested an alteration of system,

even prior to the advent of representative institutions, and the present Church Act was brought into operation about seventeen years ago as a mode of state-support to religion more in accordance with the public feeling

But the liberality that had included all "Christian sects" was soon arraigned as still insufficient. Many good and desirable colonists were not Christians, and were not therefore upon an equal status with their friends and fellow-colonists around them. Their numbers, relatively considered, might indeed be unimportant, but the principle involved was everything. The local legislature, pervaded with these views, seemed disposed to interpret the Church Act by the feelings of the times, or, more properly perhaps, to set it tacitly to one side. The House therefore entertained favourably a petition from the Jews of Sydney, who, during the session of 1845, applied for some *pro rata* proportion of these public revenues to which in common with others their people equally contributed. They asked for a donation of £1000 towards their synagogue, and a sum of £150 by way of annual stipend to their rabbi. An address to the governor, favourable to these objects, was voted by nine members out of fourteen, but referred by that functionary to the Home Office, where the object sought for, although refused under that particular form, was promised a more favour-

able reception if presented under the deliberative aspect of an Act of Council transmitted in usual form for consent of the crown.

The course of this case is partially illustrative of the state of opinion on the subject in the Victoria legislature. But the question assumed various other anomalous aspects. The liberality of colonial feeling, which in the existence of a state aid would extend its contributions to all as a kind of civil right, was checked in some by a principle of religious consistency. The Protestant had sufficiently strained his liberalities to admit the Catholic. But he became scandalized when he thought of the Jew, and possibly in the rear the Mohammedan or the Chinaman; for where was the line to be drawn? and already some argued that the state, in dispensing the aid, should take no cognizance whatever of religious truth, but solely of the cause of good order as promoted by maintaining religion generally.

It is not surprising therefore that there was with many a strong feeling against this state aid, and a desire to abolish altogether a system which involved so many doubts and inconsistencies. Considerable bodies of the Christian sects had declined the aid, although entitled to it. The Free Church of Scotland party, for example, had decided on this course, and also, as might have been expected, the

Independents and United Presbyterians. In fact it was under a motion to this effect of abolition that the question was first introduced to the legislature. The smallness of the amount involved (£6000), seemed a favourable circumstance for the accomplishment of this change The amount was undoubtedly inadequate under the altered circumstances of the colony, if the principle of state support was still to be continued; and as the views of the majority of the council were opposed to the abolition, the result of the movement was an extension of the aid to £30,000 annually

There seemed an admission with the supporters of the system that it was not one adapted for permanence, and that "the time might come" when religion could be left in Victoria, more safely than in the present condition of the place, to its own support Meanwhile the Jews of the colony, who were quite agreeable to the project of abolishing the aid, were now pressing their claims under the view of its continuance, and appeared to be supported by a majority of the assembly—differently composed however from the majority just alluded to, whose members in some instances bore no favour to this threatened latitudinarianism.

The importance of this question to the colony can scarcely be overrated, as will be manifested ere long by the increased public interest that will be

exhibited. The views of the people will then more clearly appear. My impression is that these views will prove unfavourable to this system of state support, and indeed to any other. But possibly on some earlier opportunity the compromises of religious principle that already involve the question may lead the legislature to the same views; and in this event the recent great increase to the amount of the aid must be regarded as unfortunate, and as a serious additional obstacle to the contemplated change.

Education.—A feeling of the greatest liberality prevailed in the legislature regarding assistance to the cause of education. The difficulty was with regard to the system, and the great difficulty in all educational systems was the religious element. Society will not agree to disband this element, neither will it agree upon its introduction. In this state of feeling, education naturally lapses into what is distinguished as the denominational or sectarian form, unless special effort be made to place it upon a more liberal basis. In Victoria this system had thus made considerable way. The legislature was disposed towards the National or Irish system, which, modified in some particulars to suit these colonies, had been already introduced from New South Wales, where by great exertions this educational plan was now in extensive operation, and

was found to work favourably. A national board had been appointed for Victoria in the first session, and funds voted for its use.

There were now two boards in the colony, the national and denominational, both administering public aid to education. A committee which sat on this subject during the second session, found in large bodies of the public strong antipathies to both systems, and the clergy generally in opposition to the national. Neither system was therefore recommended by this committee, but in preference a plan of assisting educational establishments as "Public Schools," wherever a good secular and moral training was imparted, without particular reference to religious teaching, except that it was not to be forced upon any of the children, nor to be intruded at certain usual school hours. In addition to these efforts for education generally, £50,000 was agreed to towards a Melbourne University.

Transportation Question.—Under the strong feelings on this subject that were fermenting in the popular mind, no session of a Victoria representative legislature could pass without the obnoxious transportation system receiving a share of notice. In the first and second sessions, accordingly, resolutions were adopted strongly condemnatory of the system, and its effects upon the colony. The proceedings in the second session were characterized

by strong animadversions upon the official representations of the governor of Van Diemen's Land, and the views of Earl Grey, the late colonial secretary, both of whom had expressed themselves favourably for the continuance of transportation, notwithstanding the gold discoveries. A report from a committee on prison discipline exposed the enormous expense and difficulties entailed on the colony in criminal jurisdiction, by the large numbers of criminal population from the adjacent penal colony.

The views of the Home Government have since happily changed on this question, and the mother country is now likely to return to that great duty of all societies, namely, to retain and manage her own criminal elements, and neither to thrust them into other communities already charged with their own proportion, nor to usher her colonial offspring into life with a leaven of crime whose disgraceful effects a century may not eradicate. The Australasian League, a moral crusade against transportation, had been founded two years previously, and had waged a vigorous warfare in the cause throughout these colonies. The objects being considered attained, that warfare has now happily ceased, and the great confederation is about to be summoned for the ceremony of dissolution.*

* The history of this body is a remarkable instance of what may be accomplished by combination in a good spirit and in a good cause.

Tariffs.—With the view of introducing uniformity of commercial policy, the Imperial government, in the first edition of the last Constitution Act, had inserted a tariff schedule for these colonies, on the general principle of free trade, and of imposing the same duty in each colony upon like articles.* But subsequently a more amicable desire prevailed to leave these matters to the colonists themselves, beyond the upholding of a general non-protective principle. Not only are local revenue requirements different in each colony, but it is eminently desirable that the colonists should debate their own way in these questions, instead of that way being found for them. The example of the parent state is ever morally powerful in guidance, and might in general be depended on. The result of colonial tariff

It has undoubtedly been a main cause in hastening the desired climax. The league was first established at Melbourne in February 1851, by the able advocacy of the Rev. John West and Mr Weston, colonists of Van Diemen's Land, delegated for the purpose. On this occasion thirty individuals or mercantile firms in Melbourne, subscribed each one hundred guineas to the cause, and the example was followed even to this large amount by others at Geelong, and by various members of the squatting body, who, although deeply interested in supplies of labour, united with their fellow-colonists in the effort to rid Australia of this social evil. These great subscriptions were imitated in Van Diemen's Land and at Sydney,—the latter city being made the head-quarters of the league, where Mr Cowper, member of the legislative council, was elected president. Victoria despatched her own delegate on the subject to England, Mr King, who, by communicating Lord Grey's hostile views to the colonists, aroused a general alarm, which has been the means of benefit.

legislation has not disappointed this confidence. I have elsewhere entered more fully into the details of the question.*

Squatting Question.—From the remarks I had occasion to make in the previous part of this volume, in introducing the reader to the squatting system of the colony, he may readily infer that this question was one of great public interest and concernment. It had indeed already assumed a very unpopular aspect; while the squatters, pitted against the great mass of the colonists by virtue of the new regulations, instinctively stood on the defensive against the usual gross attacks of extreme partisan feeling, which disposed itself to deal very summarily with them and their privileges. This feeling on the part of the public was strengthened, or more properly it acquired its partisan edge, chiefly from a knowledge of the fact that the squatting interest, united with the nominees, could command a majority in the legislature.

In nothing was this question more immediately vexatious than as it bore upon the supply of the Crown Lands for sale to the public. Since the discovery of gold, a demand for land on the part of the colonists, amounting to a perfect mania, had exhibited itself. The advantage both to themselves

* See Appendix,—Addresses to Melbourne Chamber of Commerce, pp. 31, 80-83,—where the different Tariffs are given.

individually and to the public, of the colonists thus investing their newly acquired wealth, could not be disputed. But the inadequate supply had the usual effect of enhancing the price. A thousand buyers scrambled at every sale for a hundred allotments, and in the interval of a month or a quarter between each public sale, a rise on the prices last realized of fifty or one hundred per cent. was a common occurrence. The newly arrived emigrant was confounded in such a scene by the insufficiency of his means and the upset of his previous calculations, and many new colonists from all quarters were doubtless tempted into adjacent colonies, who might have settled prosperously in Victoria with the capital of industry and skill that accompanied them, or with the wealth they had acquired at her teeming gold-fields.*

* That some exertion was being made in the latter part of last year to supply the market with more lands is shown by the following comparative statement:—

	First half of 1852.		*Last half of* 1852.	
Town lands,	999 lots,	488 acres.	Town lands, 2400 lots,	992 acres.
Other lands,	709 „	41,840 „	Other lands, 1848 „	244,218 „
Total,	1708 „	42,328 „	Total, 4248 „	245,210 „

The enormous prices of land which have so justly called for still larger supplies, have pressed most severely during the present year 1853. Great odium attached to the government in this matter, and unquestionably with reason, when months and even years began to pass without adequate amendment. The colonists were sure to be exposed to subsequent ruinous reaction, and the country deprived of the use of millions in improvements, which were probably dissipated in riot or useless extravagance.

As regarded the inadequate supply of land generally, the government pleaded the difficulties of the times with reference to the survey arrangements; and as regarded particular parts of the colony, such as the vicinities of gold-fields where lands were much sought after, there appeared to be difficulties arising from the Orders in Council. These orders were in the position of being the law of the country, and yet a law not carried into effect, and therefore not permitting the extensive tracts they referred to being made available for sale in the mode prescribed by the orders

Here was the apparent difficulty, and in order to meet the urgency of the case, the popular representatives agreed, although somewhat reluctantly, to request the government to issue with all despatch the leases, under the Orders in Council, so far as regarded the intermediate districts, in order that the lands in these localities might be thrown open for sale to the public. The popular party had thus declined to notice the case of the Unsettled districts. But a motion to the effect of embracing the whole Orders in Council was made by way of amendment and carried by a considerable majority, including of course the whole body of the squatting representatives and the nominees.

This position of affairs was rather puzzling, and there is good reason to think that the case assumed

that aspect to the governor and his executive council. The colonists were clearly of one way of thinking, and their appointed representatives of another. Public meetings began to be held, at which the council and the government were alike reprobated. Finally the leases were not issued, and the whole question was sent back for the reconsideration of the Home Government.*

New Constitution.—The Home Government had invited the Australian colonists to amend their own constitution. The supervising parent was at first disposed to take this matter into her own hand; and accordingly six years ago, the scheme of a general Assembly for all Australia had been mooted in parliament, and had been received with some passing favour, but happily afterwards abandoned, or consigned for further consideration to the option of the colonists.

The subject of the constitution had already been taken up by the Sydney legislature, whose discordance of views on the question, although rather discouraging, was at the same time eminently instructive to the inexperience of Victoria. The indications of confidence and good feeling shown by

* A long fermenting dissatisfaction with the administration found some vent in the legislature in a motion of want of confidence, which was lost by the ominous minority of 12 to 14. The result of a majority might have been curious, and must have developed some of the anomalies of colonial systems.

the late repeated concessions of the Home Government, had produced the best effects in the colony, and the legislature, now invested with unwonted consideration on such a grave question, was not disposed to risk any premature decision. One motion on the subject lapsed for want of a seconder, and another was by general consent indefinitely deferred. A third gave to a select committee the option of considering the subject of the constitution, along with a project for increasing the number of the members. The committee recommended an increase of from thirty to fifty-four members,—a measure urgently called for by the increase of public business; but it declined to enter upon the subject of the constitution.

This commendable prudence has probably saved some hasty decision which the voice of the colonial public might not have subsequently ratified One great difficulty seems to me to encumber the political pathway towards a solution of the question, namely, a want of the habit on the part of the people of considering political questions in any other light than that savouring of opposition towards political parties within or without the colony, who have occupied the position of either withholding rights or with manifest reluctance conceding them. The representative system was doubtless calculated to ameliorate this condition; but the unequal electoral

constitution of the present legislature tends rather to perpetuate these divisive tendencies.

This electoral reform, which seems to me so necessary, is not likely to be effected promptly in the colony except by assistance of the nominees or at the instance of the Home Government. In new colonies there seems no available principle short of the population basis on which to constitute a representative assembly. The body of the public are otherwise deprived of that power and consideration which are really intended by these institutions and which constitute their great advantage. The colonists generally are in that condition of well-doing which is ever favourable to good order and the temperate use of freedom. The principle in question should at least not be departed from without distinct and tenable reasons.

The movements of the New South Wales legislature are watched with great interest by its less experienced sister to the south. There appears in that assembly a disposition to cherish not only these electoral inequalities, but even the nominee element, for the sake of its check upon democratic principles. The mass of the people thus checked will exhibit the usual indications of disapproval; and these indications, rude enough probably in some aspects, will as usual be made available by their opponents as an argument for the necessity of the check.

Thus will proceed a mutual thwarting and misunderstanding, the body of the people feeling they have no adequate hold upon their legislature, and lapsing in consequence into extreme political dissatisfaction. There is no ready deliverance from this vexatious complexity without some degree of reaction, which is apt to prove discrediting for a time to popular institutions. Wrong courses cannot be adopted without bad effects. But however difficult or annoying to return to the right road, the matter is no way amended by delay.

To return to more general views on the constitution, all parties seem agreed upon the advantage of two chambers of legislation. There is also a common accord as to one of these being elective. The subject of debate and difference regards the composition of the other chamber.

The New South Wales legislature, in one of its later periodical petitions and remonstrances to the Imperial government, had prayed for a constitution resembling that of Canada. This colony, as is well known, enjoys a system of complete self-government, with exception of the usual home appointment of its governor, and of the nomination by this officer of a legislative council. The Home Office, on this occasion, promptly agreed to this prayer, expressing the satisfaction of her Majesty's government at the proposed institution in New South

Wales as in Canada of two houses of legislation, one of which was to be nominated by the crown.

The leap into this conclusion, however, does not seem to have satisfied either the colonial public or some proportion of the assembly, who deny any pledge with reference to the nominee principle of Canada, the allusion to that colony being alleged as having been only general in respect to independent government. The despatch itself, which emanated from the late colonial secretary, Sir John Pakington, alludes indeed to the power of the legislature to alter this constitution hereafter if such should be found desirable, and the present ministry it may be supposed will prove at least equally liberal in its views towards the colonists.

But a step that may prove erroneous or doubtful, may prove also difficult to retrace. It is better therefore that it should not be taken. The present electoral inequalities already alluded to are illustrations of a similar case, where the reigning majorities, although not representing their respective colonies, are naturally indisposed to give up their advantage. The unimpulsive features of British character, while they have always justified the political concessions of this reforming age, imply also, it must be remembered, a long tolerance of institutions that have once been established, although unsuitable or

unpopular; and any desired change therefore is effected only after long and divisive agitation.

I speak, as may be inferred, against the nominee principle, and in favour of that of representation for both chambers. Perhaps the former of these modes had not held that strong position which it appears to do in the minds of officials and of persons of conservative politics, but for an impression that by this form of legislation there is transferred to the colony the realities of the British constitution. The Committee of the Privy Council, reporting in May 1849 upon the Australian Constitution Bill, speaks thus with reference to the colonial system of a governor, a legislative council nominated by the crown, and a representative assembly: "We think it desirable that the institutions of the British colonies should thus be brought into the nearest possible analogy to the constitution of the United Kingdom."

If this extract were any thing more than a mere form of words, the institution it recommended might still be objected to on the substantial ground of its unpopularity. British institutions within Britain itself are a combination of modern liberty with an ancient order of things, cemented together by the local and traditionary associations of a great and ancient nation, and working with an admirable delicacy upon the British soil. But in the transfer of the people to a new and remote scene, one im-

portant element of the conditions of the parent country has not accompanied them. Were it even the case that a king, lords, and commons, fashioned to the nicest possible resemblance, had all embarked with the emigrating throng, still the Fatherland itself, with all its time-honoured associations, was left behind; and these pigmy imitations of an empire must have fallen dead-born from the ship which conveyed to the ungenial soil their unsuitable and ephemeral formularies.

But in truth there is no resemblance in the two cases beyond one of statutory ingenuities and the misuse of words. Since the boasted balance of the British constitution has long since disappeared, the position and strength of the House of Lords is now practically that of its consideration with the people. But it is precisely the want of this consideration, so essential as the foundation of every free government, that is the defect with the nominee system in the colonies.

This portion of the question must, in the progress of constitutional liberty, be even much stronger now than it might have been found at former periods. The rapid alteration of political views, particularly as regards our colonies, even within the last few years, is remarkable. A little prior to this short retrospect, by a kind of compromise with the North American colonies, legislative councils of nominees were in-

troduced into their political systems in exchange for the much desired privileges of self government and complete financial control. But in later times, the instance of the Cape Colony has shown us that when colonists are thoroughly aroused to the merits of the question, the nominee system will not be received, even by any temptation or Imperial ingenuity of compromise.

It is well known, I believe, that Canada, the principal of these American colonies, progresses quietly with her nominee council by some understanding with the executive administration, that this body *must* always accord with the representative assembly. Thus of the two parties, the liberal and conservative, which the old political forms have still left at war in the colony, the first having the majority in the assembly, has also acquired, through the means I have hinted at, the majority in the "Upper" House. This is making the best of the case, and it is doubtless a far more practicable state of things than if the council were imbued with politics hostile to those of the assembly, as would naturally result in four cases out of five by the free operation of the nominee system. But how much superior, how much more distinct and independent for all the grave duties of a second chamber, would be a body elected by the people, and under some variety of conditions and of electoral arrangement,

that might constitute an Upper House alike in legal position and in public consideration.

The appointment of the governor of a colony is generally regarded, even by the most liberal, as an Imperial question—the sole remaining official link, as it were, to connect the colonies with the empire. This is no doubt a question that, like all others of colonial bearing in this utilitarian age, will come soon, if not already, to be argued "on the merits;" and the appointment of a governor be as readily abandoned by the Home Office, on sufficient reasons, as have been of late the other cherished and once invincible principles.

If I approach this subject with some diffidence, if it is not very clear to me that the power to nominate the governor on the part of the colony would be always judiciously exercised, I must remind the reader how short a time has elapsed since our colonies—those of Australia amongst others—have enjoyed any approach to that political freedom which should have grown up with their population almost from the earliest commencement. The exclusiveness of some, the factious feelings of others, and the indifference of many more in the body politic, the result of systems now fortunately passing away, do not at once subside into a temperate and judicious exercise of liberty.

If this were a question of instituting, for the sake

of mere popular theory, a system thus attended with uncertainty, and so of terminating one in actual operation that had long proved suitable and satisfactory, the argument were at once concluded. But the whole case of home appointments, from the governor downwards, has been proverbially unsatisfactory, not only in the principle but in the practical results. If this highest of those appointments has been less specially objected to than others, this reserve has arisen, to some sensible extent at least, from the impression with the colonists, that the point in question involved the price or the penalty of Imperial connexion—a relationship cherished by British colonists far more highly, I apprehend, than the Home Government or its colonial governors can ever bring themselves to comprehend, but at the same time a privilege for which the colonists may presume it is never in the intention of their gracious Sovereign to exact any unpopular or unnecessary penalty.

"There is an essentially democratic spirit," writes one of the Australasian governors, "which actuates the large mass of the community; and it is with the view to check the development of this spirit, of preventing its coming into operation, that I would suggest the formation of an upper chamber."*

* Sir W. Denison (Van Diemen's Land), to Colonial Office, 15th August 1848.

These views on the subject of colonial constitutions form an apt text for the whole political discussion of this volume. This is the natural language of every governor who sees his colonial position through the medium of a home nomination. Where a colonial population is essentially British, the democratic spirit alluded to is the direct effect of two leading causes—the first being the removal of the people to a new scene, the second the general wellbeing and consequent self-consideration of the operative classes. The first of these causes is an unavoidable necessity in all colonizing operations, the second is in its main features a social blessing of the highest order; and it is only under the system above alluded to, of thwarting the unavoidable tendencies of society, that democracy assumes certain divisive and forbidding features. Until the check system has been exploded alike from the pen and the thoughts of colonial authorities, they will still continue under the old and approved method of opposing a democratic dust which themselves have been the means of stirring up.*

* I recognise, however, his excellency's liberality when he recommends with reference to an Upper House (the chief subject of his despatch) that the less the government has to do with the appointments the better. This practical indifference on the part of the government is its true strength, both because it brings more satisfaction to the people and a more prudent and considerate course to the governor. But I cannot coincide with the plan of appointing the members for life. This would be to concede popular institutions, and at the same

The governor of a colony is at the head not merely of its political but also of its social world; and I confess it a great misfortune and no less an inconvenience to colonial society, should its governor, from want of manners, education, or personal character, be found unequal to his duties in the last department, whatever might become of him as to the first. Here is the sensible danger in popular elections, and the disadvantageous set-off to that vigour of administration, that eminently practical and popular government, which may be expected to result from this responsible system.

The social prestige of a Home appointment is in fact the great strength of the present system, and the chief point against which we are to measure the opposing disadvantages, and to compare the merits of a different mode. I will not pretend that the Home Government, as regards some particulars in its selections, has shown more care than might have emanated from the colonists. Perhaps, on the contrary, the former might be estimated to have fallen short in this respect. But in faulty cases there is at all events a less vulgar publicity—a certain dimness of antecedents that is so far favourable to outward appearances; and although

time to deprive them of one conspicuous feature of their advantage. Besides it would only further restrict those opportunities, whose rarity already is a subject of his excellency's regret, by which merit and ability may aspire to positions of honourable distinction.

but a lame apology withal, this is decidedly of two such cases, *cæteris paribus*, the best.

What seems at fault with the popular principle in such a case is the system of direct election. With regard to an assembly, individual intrusions of an unworthy and unsuitable description are rectified in the whole body; but with a "corporation sole," like the head of the executive, the mistaken or factious choice of a governor admits of no such mitigation.

I am not desirous of ramifying the argument, and content myself for the present merely to hint at views that erelong will be enunciated far more extensively and distinctly. It is sufficient here to allude to principles rather than to particular modes of carrying them out; but I would be satisfied, under any judicious system of indirect election, to risk, one with another, the popular rather than the Imperial results; and to place the personal consideration, administrative vigour, and mutuality of accord between the people and their authorities, as represented in the one, against all the glitter of a prestige in the other, worthless when weighed against real qualities, and that every interval of social and political progress leaves in less consideration.*

I think I am justified in asserting that the require-

* The point of official connexion between the Home and Colonial governments, which, undoubtedly, should exist somewhere, will be found here in the retention of office by the reigning authority until receipt of the Imperial confirmation of the governor elect.

ment of the colonies is not parliamentary representation in the Imperial government. They have no reasonable doubt, in the present day at least, of the cordial feeling and good intentions of all parties at Home towards them, and therefore little or nothing practically would be gained by this remote honour, which, besides, might endanger their exemption from Imperial taxation. Their call is for local self-government, and with this privilege they are alike able and willing to pay every expense incurred, by their own advice and consent, for their own benefit. They are thus in the condition of being free municipalities of the empire, enjoying certain extra-municipal privileges by reason of their remote and peculiar position. This relationship is not inconsistent with the Home institutions; and the colonies have everything to gain by the overshadowing wing of a Great Parent who, in a confidence that will be promptly reciprocated, has abandoned every systematic interference, but whose supervision and authority may still be exercised with acknowledged benefit. Imperial liberality will not have the effect of diminishing the attachment of colonists to the land of their origin, or of reducing in their estimation the attractive status of their British citizenship, or the dignity and greatness of their common country.

CHAPTER XI.

SOCIETY.

Impressions of Colonial Society—Physical Toils of New Settlements—Some Exemptions in Australia—The Pastoral Vocation—Great Social Change wrought by the Gold Discoveries—Desertion of Servants—Eccentricities and Extravagance—The bright Side—Diggers looking for Wives, and Emigrant Girls for Husbands—Diggers' Wives *versus* Ladies—The Ups and Downs of Fortune—Unsettled Aspect from constant Immigration—Troubles of the newly arrived Colonists—Colonial Society, its practical and utilitarian Character—Rudeness of Social Aspect—Comparative Advantages—The Colonial Press—The Newspaper—Its great Development in Colonies—Literary Features—Sketch of the Press in Victoria—Rise and Position of the Melbourne Argus—Education—Rival Systems of Public Schools—Private Schools—Religion—Voluntaryism of Colonies—Postal Communications—Concluding Reflections.

An impression is prevalent in the mother country that her colonies—the more recent and progressive of them at least—are for the most part peopled from the humbler walks of her crowded society. The mechanic, the field-labourer, the able workman in all departments of bone and muscle, as distinguished from those of brains and mental cultivation, are supposed to comprise, with but few exceptions, the masses of population that stream forth incessantly into our colonies,—a population naturally therefore

unfavourable, as much to a high social refinement as to those aristocratic and time-honoured institutions that characterize the Fatherland.

If some of these conclusions have a savour of truth, the premises from which they are derived are at all events erroneous. Our colonies have proved, in later times at least, quite as attractive to the educated as to the unlettered classes of home society. I venture even further to think, that of these two social divisions, the worker by mind and the worker by hand, the proportions of the former are found to have emigrated into our newer colonies in excess of what they appear at home. The present population of Melbourne is chiefly composed of persons born and for the most part brought up in the mother country; and I believe I speak to a general local impression, that the proportion of persons who have received a good practical education, of persons of some cultivation and address, accustomed to social intercourse and of some measure of refinement, is rather beyond that which might be found pertaining to a town of similar extent in Britain.

But the circumstances of all new colonies must be unfavourable to this advanced social aspect. Colonial society is thus auspiciously launched forth, but the question is, Will it continue so? The vocations connected with mind are fewer in colonies than at home—or at least there is in every direction more of

the aspect of physical toil. The requirements for a long time are chiefly of a physical character. Settling down upon an unbroken sod, the colonists have all their improvements before them—the uprooting of primeval forests, the raising and levelling for a town and its streets in one place, operations for bridges here and there, and for roads everywhere. The demand is ever for the labourer and artisan, whose importance rises proportionately in the social scale. His remuneration is of course in consonance, and the tide of the employea is naturally deflected into those departments which offer at once the most useful vocation to the colony, and the most ready resource to the penniless stranger in a new home.

These are features common, in greater or less degree, to all new colonies. At the same time, Victoria, and indeed Australia generally, has been by the natural features of the country more favoured than most others of our colonial settlements, as regards that preliminary physical drudgery of every new country, by which colonial society is long withheld, more or less, from the higher aspects of refinement and civilisation. The beauties of cultivation presented almost everywhere throughout England, as we rapidly traverse, by modern modes of travel, the varied surface of our noble country—the alternate park and garden, the every aspect of the arts and appliances of man, represent the ac-

cumulated achievements of human toil, graduated over centuries since the age when the forest, the bog, and the morass, formed the conspicuous features. If we transfer our view to the backwoods of America, we perceive the recommencement, as it were, of the same labour, and a society depressed in its outward aspects by the daily sweat and toil in which it is continually immersed. But the free grassy surface of a great part of Australia, ready-made for the plough, has overstepped a long age of such customary colonial toil, and saved her fortunate sons from a century of physical warfare.

Not only could the agriculturist in many localities sit down upon a ready cleared farm, but nearly the entire surface was found available for pasture —for a vocation immediately productive, and not characterized by dull and prostrating labour. And this vocation also proved eminently useful in raising plentifully an article of export by which the colony was with proportionate liberality supplied with imports—with those great vehicles of progress to a commencing society, the machinery, implements, and fabrics of old countries, articles that must for many long years prove superior in every respect to the rude attempts of young colonial handicraft.

Australian society, therefore, enjoyed its special advantages, although it still labours under a number of the usual preliminary drawbacks. The par-

tial relief from the cleaving, uprooting, and clearing labours of new settlements, and the benefits of external commerce, arising from the export produce, have greatly ameliorated the social aspect, and permitted, in an early youth, of wealth and refinements that usually appear only in the later life of a colony.

In this respect, the pastoral vocation in particular, as one requiring not only some amount of capital, but also oversight, experience, and judgment, rather than physical labour, was proverbially suitable for a gentleman in all senses of the word, as combining the useful and ornamental in society. This vocation was therefore a sphere of special attraction to those whose means and acquirements enabled them to fill it creditably. The squatter, if his manners permitted, easily attained the first rank in colonial society. The free and easy existence of these colonists when secluded in the bush, stood out indeed in striking or amusing contrast to their position and manners during a visit to town. Attired for their downward journey after a fashion of their own, bespattered with mud below, invisible above within a forest of whiskers and mustaches, and cantering at their own independent pleasure alike through crowded street or silent wilderness, a troop of squatters enters the town like an avalanche of bush-rangers, brushing past

the menacing constables, and everywhere charging and dispersing the vulgar and impeding throng. But who is to recognise these seeming Orsons of the wilds, when within an hour afterwards they present themselves at Government House, or the private festivities of the colonists, or lightly dance the newest polkas at the quarterly assemblies, where the gentle maiden "just out" and her maturer sister, revolving respectively a brief or a long engagement, sigh alike for the hand of a squatter.

But when I speak of pastoral Australia, I describe a scene of life and manners that has already sensibly begun to pass away. Perhaps no country ever experienced a change so sudden and so complete in its social features as the colony of Victoria, by the effects of her auriferous soil. The case of California was less striking, because little comparatively of a previously established social polity was encountered and overturned. In Victoria, on the other hand, the general rush to the diggings, which curiosity at first prompted, paralyzed everything in a variety of industrial callings. The labourers in the warehouses and shops, and about the wharves and shipping, domestic servants everywhere, the workmen belonging to young and prospering manufactories, deserted in the entire mass. The resistance of some staid proportion to the news of one week was utterly dissolved in the next, on the ar-

rival of the post, or the escort from the mines. The employed were everywhere as important and as independent as the employer, or possibly more so; and the rewards at the diggings favoured chiefly the stout arm and the hard hand, whatever the station or the merits of the owner.

An endless variety of fortune in digging-life is related. The ups and downs of colonial pursuits were sufficiently proverbial even prior to the flood-tide of vicissitude that was added to the social picture by the gold-fields. The conduct of the masses of our fellow-men under the trials of sudden superabundance may be as interesting to the observer of human nature, although it may not be quite as edifying, as those trials of adversity and want which are most frequently their lot. Large amounts of gold fell into hands totally unused to such possessions. That much of these vast means, so effectual for a thousand good purposes, were grievously mispent was only to be expected. Waste and extravagance characterized many. One digger boasts amongst a crowd that he has devoured a £20 bank note spread out upon bread and butter, and another that he has lighted his pipe with some fragment of the same description, whose value he could scarce charge his memory with having glanced at. Large sums were squandered in public-houses, which increased and throve apace, spreading in their effects

a proportionate darkness over the social aspect. Whole weeks and months of hard-earned gold, by ounces and even pounds weight at a time, disappeared at these haunts, in a mazy account and reckoning between a landlord and his customer, "chalked up" during successive days of intoxication. Additional modes of investment, prompt and attractive, were sadly wanting to the masses, such, for example, as enlarged savings bank facilities, and above all an adequate supply of convenient allotments of the public lands, which was daily and even riotously demanded by these wealth-encumbered colonists, and the want of which, whether with or without excuse to the local administration, was at all events a vexatious loss both financial and social to the community.

But the picture had its bright as well as its dark side. Many settled down into quiet and thriving colonists. Many acts of kindness and liberality were performed with surplus wealth, and large donations made to useful public purposes of religion or humanity. Sons and brothers devoted some surplus earnings to defray the passages to the colony of the mothers or sisters whose unwilling poverty had left them hitherto behind; or they repaid the small loans of some benevolent society that had already effected for them this desired reunion.*

* The experience in this respect of the society instituted by Mrs Chisholm is encouraging, and suggests the inquiry as to the possibility

A sudden leap in the financial condition, suggested one equally prompt in the domestic relations. Many a young digger, as he sat in his noisy or cheerless tent, and surveyed alternately the ample provision of gold by his side, and the comfortless life he endured withal, bethought himself of that which is described as a prospective crown of joy to a bachelor, namely, a wife. Packing up his knapsack he would start for town, having previously for precaution sent his treasures before him by the armed escort. As he threads his way through the busy street, his eyes are ever on the outlook. If there is no late arrival of "needlewomen" from Mr Herbert's society, if Mrs Chisholm's last advised ship is not yet in, or if the cargo of Britannia's fair daughters landed only a week before by a government free emigration ship has already disappeared bodily, then must he take his chance where he can get it, and he is vigilant in proportion as he finds he has arrived on the ground a long day too late for the fair.

of some great extension, by means of government, adequate to the wants of society. If all free or assisted passages were to be given on the footing of loans, to be repaid at optional periods when the obliged parties found themselves able, the result in after-years might form an interesting feature. The names, parishes, &c., of all such parties, might be accessible to the public alike at home and in the colony, with the dates of repayments, principal, or interest, or both. Some form of acknowledgment of such payments might serve as a family relic, to be exhibited with allowable pride of independence. The result of such a system might prove more successful than most people would feel disposed to predict, and permit a proportionately larger emigration than at present for the same cost.

Here then is a trim petticoat washing down the door-steps of a shop. She gets through her work creditably, and he is rapidly making up his mind. One little preliminary is still wanting—unimportant perhaps: but yet it is as well to see her face. When he asks the direction of Collins' Street, she turns full upon him that mask or index of the soul behind. Good gracious! how briskly he starts off, and without even waiting the answer. Perhaps he knew the place perfectly all the time, or perhaps, if one had been sufficiently near, he might have been heard to whisper that he was looking for a wife and not a mother.

Again there is hope. Two angelic forms appear ahead, such at least they seem by the enchantments of distance to youthful and enamoured eyes. But the fair disturbers stand at either side of the street sixty-six feet apart, and as he approaches the goal of his happiness, in the perplexities of undecided selection, he strives by a sort of game at bo-peep to maintain the precise centre of the thoroughfare against the incessant waggons and bullock-teams. He has already gained the name of one—a matter of perfect certainty, because she has just intermitted her window-cleaning to answer to a call from within. There is something in knowing a name. It is already a kind of link; still he has a disturbing preference for the other notwithstanding.

But he is suddenly again on the move, for one of these rival attractions having just disappeared, he cannot for the instant bring his mind to a bearing with regard to the other.

If we had patience to follow him, perhaps we should find that his trials were not of long endurance. The fair objects he was in quest of are not reluctant to experience or even to respond to such significant attentions. Indeed we must hope they never will be. They are even themselves stealing a glance at the passing diggers, but of course are too sly for detection, and nobody is the wiser. All are not even thus diffident. Here is a pretty young emigrant who yesterday signed articles to a genteel family. She had secured as her vocation the door-bell and the message department; yet today she throws up her situation the moment she learns that the house is not near a thoroughfare, and particularly a road to the diggings.

The legislature and government of Victoria have judiciously represented to the Home authorities the advantage of devoting the colonial funds as extensively as possible to the introduction of female colonists, the voluntary immigration into the colony consisting now almost entirely of males. These females, therefore, and particularly the young who may form wives for the colonists, are now arriving frequently, although still in very inadequate pro-

portions. They are promptly aware of the state of matters, domestic and social, and find themselves in very flattering request. There is a strong affinity in such cases to the physical and mercantile world, where the consideration due to any article is measured by the urgency of demand and the slowness of supply. These fair damsels soon assume the defensive altitudes of their position, and skirmish from those social heights which a colony permits them to occupy. Although they want long wages, they prefer short engagements. They have other objects than service; they are looking to be mistresses themselves. Here is one signing her engagement with white kid gloves. She was very particular in her inquiries, and long in hesitation. Her sister had made much less demur, but left her place next day, as she thought the locality of her mistress's residence rather dull.

The officials at the emigrants' barracks, who have been at some pains to provide respectable first engagements for these fastidious inmates, beginning to get impatient, threaten their obstinate charges with speedy deprivation of their free quarters. A score or two of ladies, who have fought the entire day in the attempt to hire servants, complain of a very partial success; whilst a crowd of diggers and other colonists, bobbing their impatient heads above the surrounding fences, and signalizing some

object of their choice, find a wonderful facility in forming engagements for life with those backward maidens who have just declined even a month's trial under certain different conditions with their own sex.

Love at first sight was a daily occurrence, and by the hand she just pledged the fair betrothed was dragged into the nearest furnishing warehouse or the most stylish milliner's, by an impetuous lover who ever vociferated for the choicest of the stock. There were not wanting some still spicier touches of the *jeu d'esprit*, to give a yet more piquant edge to this amusing and far from displeasing picture. A damsel in the streets at noonday is accosted by a rough voice that swears to her bonnet being unworthy of the fair face it contains, and ere effecting a hasty retreat the speaker has dropped a ten pound note at the feet of his charmer, for the purpose of adjusting a more seemly equality.

Those classes that are systematically clothed in "purple and fine linen" must not grudge an occasional longing for the same display, or even a successful rivalry as regards the gorgeousness of externals, in the humbler walks of life, as opportunity offers. The diggers streamed into every shop of fashionable pretensions, and the silk-mercer measured his hopes of a customer by all those grim personal indications that in other days would have only

disappointed them. A shawl or a dress was more suitable to such customers at twenty guineas than at ten, without much concern about the quality; and a "digger's wife" emerged into the streets like an Eastern Queen, saving some differences. A lady, driven comparatively into shade, was fain to distinguish herself from her new rivals by the plainer styles, both because others were not procurable in the compass of her smaller purse, and because she might for once give credit to the other sex that her own charms required no adornment.

The employer and employed, the master and servant, frequently changed relations. This was no uncommon event prior to the gold discoveries. In the early times of South Australia, as I have been told, a public-house at Adelaide or in its conveniently vague vicinity, was kept by an old lieutenant of the army, who had promoted his captain to be head waiter. Some of the diggings' stories have a peculiar piquance, but whether or not this has enhanced their truth is another matter. "Will any of you hire as my cook?" said a summary voice, as the speaker stopped his horse before a party who were enjoying themselves at a country inn doorway; "forty pounds a-year, and usual rations."—"No, thank you," was the prompt reply, "we are looking for one ourselves, and will give you eighty."

A squatter, somewhere about, was deserted one

morning by all his hands in a body, who set off for the gold-fields. Having after no small trouble set himself again to rights, and subdued his choler by a month or two's interval, he experienced again the rising storm by encountering a detachment of his old hands returning to the station. Success was not the rule at the diggings, and doubtless these foolish youths, thought their quondam master, had returned as full of penitence as they were void of money. But he was resolute for resistance, and when his indignant throat was clear enough for utterance, he peremptorily rejected their claims for rehiring, expressing at the same time some curiosity to learn on what grounds they could prefer them, or how they ventured to return. As they had not yet had an opportunity of speaking, they now proceeded to explain that they had come in answer to an advertisement in the newspapers regarding the sale of the station, the whole of which they were desirous of buying. This was beyond all reasonable endurance, and we must hope that the rising emotions of our pastoral friend prevented his hearing distinctly the entire purport of the offer, which went not only to buy the station, but to give himself a fair allowance to continue the management under his new masters.

The turmoil occasioned by the first rush to the gold-fields was soon succeeded by that of the newly

arriving colonists, who, struck by the electric news, hastened from all parts of the world towards Victoria. The adjacent colonies first poured in their streams; and then came small and varied accessions from India, the Cape, and elsewhere. At length a surpassing tide rolled in from the remoter shores of the mother country. A few came from other parts of Europe, in particular from Germany, to join a number of their countrymen who were already established and prosperous in the colony; and, finally, the large supplies of merchandise from America brought accessions to the population also from that direction—from the United States as well as our own colonial settlements.

This inpouring of population from without is the means of a degree of rapid progression that cannot of course be accomplished otherwise; but it ever exposes society to an unsettled aspect, and to scenes of distress and misery that no amount of general prosperity will effectually prevent. The masses who arrived to-day are thrust into competition with those who came yesterday. The anxiety to find employment causes large numbers to rush into unsuitable vocations. The want for a time at first of accommodations and domestic comfort, the personal exposure to change and inclemency of weather, the bad health or death of friends and protectors;—all these, combined with the sorrowing reminiscences

of far-distant friends and home, impress simultaneously thousands of new colonists with disheartening feelings of anxiety and vexation.

These feelings gradually pass away as a settled employment is acquired, and some share experienced of the general prosperity. But this settlement usually involves some interval of time, during which the incessant tide of immigration is ever supplying fresh victims to the exigencies of a new home. Cases of suicide have repeatedly occurred in the first intensities of disappointment, and some who despaired not indeed of life generally, but of life in Victoria, as far as regarded a customary measure of enjoyments, appeared glad to escape elsewhere, or to return once again, although poorer than before, to their native land. With more reason and consideration, colonists, who have acquired property and retired from active business, have latterly felt disposed to remove their families from the expense and discomforts attending the present social dismemberment of the colony, and for a time at least to betake themselves to other localities, where the hundreds or thousands of their annual incomes may procure them more enjoyments and more consideration than they can meet with amongst a crowd of rivals in golden Victoria.

It is the condition and features of this apparently confused medley of human beings we are now to

look into, and thus to ascertain how promptly is the mass smoothed down into an orderly English aspect. Such is the case at least with the great bulk of such society, although there is ever on its outskirts some partial contentions of a less happy aspect.

Change of fortune is the constant feature of a thriving colony. The change is not always for the better, but it is so in the great proportion of cases, —a circumstance that imparts alike vigour and exciting novelty to the social picture. Hope is ever conspicuous in the mind of the Victorian, imparting all its vivacious characteristics; and the Australian climate has often monopolized the whole credit for a joyousness of life that is due, in part at least, to the effect of other Australian circumstances.

These circumstances of new colonies, in connexion with the simple and direct character, generally speaking, of colonial wants and colonial vocations, relating as these vocations must long do chiefly to commercial requirements—to wants of the body rather than of the mind—open a broad and free path to progress in every rank, and to the industry and merits of every individual of the community. The hill of fortune and honours may be successfully ascended even from those grades that are the most humble in our home society. A journeyman carpenter, for example, is observed to finish with particular care the chair which the city corporation has ordered

from his employer for its chief magistrate; and when questioned as to his motive, he admits that he intends, on some future occasion, to sit there himself. As the story goes, he does sit there, and with credit to all concerned. And again, the emigrant who landed in perfect destitution a few years ago, may now be observed alighting from his carriage at the colonial assembly, and be heard shortly afterwards edifying his fellow-colonists by an address, not indeed garnished by rhetorical flourish or varied by classical quotations, but yet characterized by practical good sense, and, above all, by a clearness of meaning perfectly excruciating to the refined diplomatists of old societies.

Education of the more finished order is less essential in a colony to the acquirement of position than it might be found at home. Not of course that this great lever of human progress and refinement can be less valuable there than elsewhere. But when society is marked by incessant change and intermixture, when wealth and, in natural course, also social importance fall largely upon persons self taught and self-raised, upon persons who are characterized by a shrewd good sense rather than by educational accomplishments, it follows that these higher acquirements, if they are not in less estimation, are at least less exhibited and less called for in general intercourse. There is indeed a marked

desire for public honours among classes not usually so ambitious at home, and an effort at public usefulness even beyond what appears in quarters where perhaps better opportunities for such exertions have been enjoyed. Here then is a curious contrast, not without its parallel in other features of the progressive world, where those surrounding circumstances which in our colonies happily tend to leaven the whole mass with independence and prosperity, have at the same time a reducing and levelling effect as compared with old countries in those high refinements they exhibit in the comparative few.

Colonial society is pre-eminently practical and utilitarian. This must be expected where no ancient local usages or institutions influence another course. It is the course of common sense, and one altogether unavoidable among the intelligent masses in a new sphere. Our colonies are certainly republics whenever they separate from the parent state. To conceive them pondering over any other form of government, and deliberately instituting those inequalities of old societies that have acquired their root in remote time and in a totally different condition of society, is an idea entirely foreign to our age and people. These inequalities of long established governments bear up successfully against the levelling pressure of modern progress by virtue of circumstances which have never existed in colo-

nies, and which cannot be created now by commands either from within or from without. We may admire the long settled and delicately adjusted forms of our parent government, the successive gradations of anciently instituted ranks, like a ladder for the ambition of genius and attainments; we may possibly prefer such institutions for our colonies; but for these colonies they are simply unattainable, nor is it reasonable to suppose that the laborious fabric of a thousand years' adjustment can be transferred like so much railway machinery to run without "accidents" upon the new Australian as upon the old British line. The effort to engraft such inequalities tends merely to agitate and divide society; and the measure of successful ingenuity with which any step may be taken in this direction appears to me only the measure of a present social jarring and of a future political difficulty; for every such step must be eventually retaken.

The social equalities of colonies give them an aspect of rudeness to eyes that are fresh from the mother country. But this first impression, although in some respects a true one, affords only a superficial view of the whole case. This rudeness of aspect is the necessary result of a general prosperity that brings all classes to some similar degree of independence and consideration. The social aspects are

not indeed the highest, as regards some points of comparison with the home picture, because pursuits generally have lapsed into a material rather than a mental character. But when we compare the scene in its entirety, marked as it is throughout by the combination of intelligence, industry, and plenty, we shall probably admit that it is more pleasing in the present, and more promising in the future.

The independent bearing of the colonial labouring population, in short of the whole of the employed classes, is often commented upon. A labourer in Australia is indeed a very different personage from one in the mother country, and he is not long of knowing the fact. There never was and never can be any fixed scale of relative consideration for one class as compared with another in society, when this depends so much on the proportion of the numbers that offer as compared with the vocations that await them. The atmosphere we breathe is not more necessary to society than the labourer; but in order to appreciate fully either the one or the other of these necessaries, society should be made to feel some stint in the supply. This, in the dealings of a bounteous nature, is never the case with the first, and but rarely, in old countries, is it the case to any trying extent with the second. An English gentleman, therefore, might be disposed to regard the license and bearing of

the mechanic and labouring classes of colonies as somewhat subversive of social landmarks, and a feature altogether disagreeable in the colonial landscape.

This feeling gradually gives way with the effect of habit and of a less prejudiced view, and the independent position of such classes then assumes a more advantageous light. The picture is not free from exceptionable aspects. But, generally speaking, the consideration awarded to all classes must be regarded in the light of an extension of the sphere of society, that involves with it many good and improving features. After some experience of colonial life, one certainly feels, on returning to the mother country, that in this respect the range of society is narrowed, that the social edifice is constructed more selfishly, that it is certainly more defective as regards social destinies; and that we are surrounded by features and circumstances ever painfully reminding us, that the lesser half of our fellow-men lives in a superabundant enjoyment at the expense of the brains and sinews, the nightly and daily toil, the scant rewards and plenteous sufferings, of by far the larger portion of humanity.

The public press of colonies is too remarkable a feature to be omitted in the social picture. The conspicuous department of the colonial press is that which is connected with the newspaper,—a de-

partment in which our colonies generally as much exceed the mother country in comparative development, as in other literary departments these new societies fall short of her. Amongst an incessantly changing community, with all the novelties of daily life, amongst masses of thriving population, well found in means for the luxury of newspaper reading, the daily press has full and free play. Where there are many new projects, and where trade is to be pushed among parties in great measure strange to each other, newspaper advertising is largely resorted to, and the press is of course proportionately supported.

The newspaper extends into a mass of readers unknown in Britain—unknown at least as the great and swaying majority. A paper cannot therefore be expected to make much head that does not sympathize, and that is not to a great degree addressed to this mass, whose tendencies are essentially democratic. This term, democratic, according to the political party from whence it emanates, is associated with ideas of reproach, necessity, or political justice. It is a term indeed that is rarely permitted, under colonial political systems, to be disconnected with the grumbling propensities of John Bull, expressed as these are by a colonial press in no very courteous style. It may not be easy to rid the colonial press of its proverbial coarseness of literary piqu-

ance; but a more accordant political system would, I think, tend sensibly to alter the direction at least of its noisy artillery, and to abate to a beneficial extent the offensive personalities that are frequently heaped not only upon local parties and local governments, but upon individual colonists and the officers of the public service. Such must ever continue while an intelligent and prosperous public, who take a decided interest in their political concerns, continue without an effective control over all departments of their government

That the colonial newspaper press must be different in its literary and political aspects from that of Britain, cannot be doubted. The articles are usually referable to more confined topics—to subjects of local concernment, to small partisan warfare, or to personal animosities. The meanings are less delicately couched, the witticism, the reproof, the menace, the political disquisitions, are all put forth in a coarse relief, or, to speak mildly, they are plainer and more direct. In this respect newspaper articles are deficient in real literary and convictive force, but at the same time they convey clearer meanings to the great proportion of readers, and thereby more effectually interest and guide the public in particular views of current affairs.

The crisis of the gold discoveries has produced an extraordinary change upon the aspect of the news-

paper in Victoria. While the influx of operative masses has strengthened the democratic influences and increased political contentions, the newspaper has suddenly swelled out to a magnitude equal to or even eclipsing the hitherto unrivalled press of England and America. Like the advertising columns of The Times, those of the Melbourne press now represent every aspect of the social as well as of the commercial picture. Here are the wants and requirements of the grave and the gay, the unhappy and the contented, the religious and the dissolute. The calls of male and female, rich and poor, young and old, ring in the reader's ears. Here are names well known, and names totally unknown. Not a few seem friendless and houseless; many are in anxiety, many in affliction. There are the ejaculations of the dying, and the *post mortem* proceedings for the many dead.

Here one scans through a long column of houses to get, beside a much shorter one of houses to give. Then come interminable advertisements for servants —for cooks, housemaids and laundresses, bullock-drivers, shepherds, and hut-keepers. The list of articles lost is ever as usual much longer than that which confesses to articles found. The "stolen or strayed" occupy whole columns, while whole pages are devoted to live stock impounding notices. Extracts from the Government Gazette tell of acts

of the legislature and ordinances of the executive. The column for "Partnerships," rapidly formed and as hastily dissolved, is considerable. There is a long and irregular *divertissement* concerning theatricals, concerts, and equestrian exploits; dancing and singing assemblages at public houses, cheap or expensive, more or less select; and "dignity balls" of the local *élite*, quarterly or more frequently, in the large rooms of the hotels or of public meeting-places. Calls of public meetings, and demands of pecuniary subscriptions for purposes of religion or of public charity, agreeably diversify these lighter avocations.

We pass to features more novel and more Australian. The Supreme Court has ever an increasing column portentous of diggings accidents in its inquiries for "next of kin," and for the assets and debts of Y. Z., and many more who have died intestate and unknown. The feelings of hope, suspense, and anguish, exhibit themselves in formidable columns, where mothers who have fought their weary way from a far distant home seek with still lingering hope their long-lost sons, and where deserted and destitute wives strive to catch the eye of some wayward husband, and yet fear too truly that their tiny paragraph may be overlooked, either voluntarily or involuntarily, amidst the abyss of its fellow-advertisements. "If this should meet the

eye of" is a preliminary form that might head an entire column of its own. Here are long-parted friends anxious to meet; while others, ambiguous on the point of acceptance, are content to intimate their whereabouts, so that if A is disposed to see B, he may have that opportunity at the Devil's Gully Diggings during business hours, the Porcupine tap at leisure moments, at the sign of the Southern Cross, or the Diggers' Arms, or a hundred other localities throughout the town, the diggings, or the bush.

The daily press had been distinguished in Victoria by a remarkable development even prior to the gold discoveries. In 1849, Melbourne sent forth three daily papers, whose array of advertisements creditably represented the enterprise and prosperity of a town containing then scarcely 18,000 inhabitants. The early appearance of the newspaper in the young Port Phillip settlement was characteristic alike of our countrymen and their progress. In the middle of the year 1835, a single family had settled on the shores of Port Phillip. Two years and a-half afterwards, Melbourne produced its first newspaper. This place was then a small village, and it still retained the primitive name of "The Settlement," by which it was at first familiarly designated.

This newspaper made its appearance on the 1st of

January 1838, under the auspices of Mr Fawkner, whose name has already been before us. Its first advent was under the modest form of a manuscript sheet, to which the public had free access for the perusal of commercial advertisements, interlarded with paragraphs of local gossip or contentions. The printing machinery having soon after arrived, the paper reappeared on the 11th March following as "The Melbourne Advertiser," but was afterwards suspended in consequence of certain discouraging regulations. It appeared once more, however, on the 16th February 1839. Meanwhile "The Port Phillip Gazette" was brought forth in October 1838, and a third, "The Port Phillip Herald," was added in the beginning of 1840. These three different papers were each published semi-weekly, and thus contributed amongst them a daily newspaper to the colonial public.

The other towns of the colony were not slow to follow the example set them by the capital. Geelong has for some time enjoyed a daily newspaper—"The Advertiser," besides others published less frequently. The small town of Portland once boasted of three contemporary newspapers among six or eight hundred inhabitants; but the literary ambition of that locality is now, I believe, satisfied with a smaller number. Belfast and Warnambool contribute also their representatives to the "fourth estate."

Of the three original sheets published in Melbourne, the sole present survivor is that which appeared the latest, and which is now a print of formidable dimensions, issued daily under the slightly altered name of "The Melbourne Morning Herald." Several other papers made their appearance at intervals during the rapid progress of the town; but after some precarious contest they have all disappeared with one remarkable exception, whose case is already one of the wonderful features of an extraordinary colony.

The rise and progress of "The Argus," the newspaper alluded to, which, in point of dimensions, number of advertisements, and extent of circulation, may worthily be called "The Times" of the southern hemisphere, now forms a significant and interesting leaf in colonial history. Some brief notice therefore may not prove unacceptable to my readers.

"The Argus" was founded in October 1848, and superseded "The Melbourne Argus," a paper established shortly before. The paper was at this time in a small and rather a declining way, having, with a semi-weekly publication, a circulation of 625 copies. The advertisements yielded about £13 weekly, and the weekly expenses were about £30. The field was at this time occupied by two other papers, published daily, and superior to their young rival in circulation and advertisements. In June

1849, the Argus assumed a daily issue, and towards the end of 1851, amidst a contentious editorial rivalry, it was generally considered to have attained the first position. The advertisements then yielded £80 weekly, and the circulation had risen to 1500.

The great era of the gold discoveries had now overtaken Australia, and with it there fell upon the press, in a pre-eminent degree, all those expenses and difficulties that we have elsewhere had occasion to notice in the other colonial vocations. One of the rival broadsheets now retired from the contest, under the pressure alike of these reigning troubles, and of a considerable offer for goodwill and material from the Argus proprietors. The paper thus discontinued was the representative of the original Melbourne Advertiser, which had successively adopted the titles of "The Port Phillip Patriot" and "The Daily News," under which latter denomination it fell into the arms of the rising Argus, whose popular sympathies and extreme democratic politics were now extending its importance with a rapidity that already imparted a view of its approaching destiny.

Three thousand pounds had been paid for the Daily News, which left to its purchasers about 600 new subscribers, a considerable addition of advertisements, and, above all, the advantage of a fast-printing machine, by which 1000 copies per hour

could be thrown off. The importance of the last addition was soon manifest. The effects of the gold were overspreading the colony with a perfect avalanche of commercial and social necessities, all seeking their various objects through the medium of the local press. In May 1852, the weekly receipts for advertising had risen to between £250 and £300, and the circulation to 5000.

The Argus was now reputed to stand second only to The Times and Advertiser of the metropolis, in the British dominions. It had already passed all its Australian contemporaries, including the Sydney Morning Herald, a long established daily paper, whose rare temper for a colonial publication had given it a high status, and the large circulation, as was then understood, of 3500 to 4000 copies. At this time a reduction was made in the price of the Argus to the extent of one-third, on the spirited view that a still more general diffusion would occasion an enlarged advertising. This change proved eminently successful. In July of the same year, only two months afterwards, the paper doubled its size, and in the following February another sheet was still added. The weekly receipts for advertisements had now reached £800.

The circulation had increased so rapidly of late, that at this time the mechanical appliances of the colony were scarcely adequate to reach the very

extreme of demand. Ten thousand five hundred copies were thrown off daily, and the possibilities of further circulation were held in abeyance until the office was possessed of more adequate appliances. This daily circulation was superior to that of three leading metropolitan papers, according to Stamp Office data, namely, the Daily News, the Morning Herald, and the Morning Chronicle combined.

The Argus was at this time printed by means of four different machines, which were in almost constant operation. The hands employed in all departments amounted to one hundred and forty. As some specimen of the expenses attending the colonial press, it may be remarked that while compositors are usually paid in Britain at the rate of 8d. or 9d. "per thousand," the payment in the Argus office is 2s. per thousand. The price of this immense paper, with its voluminous reading matter, commercial and shipping intelligence, and upwards of 2000 advertisements, is three halfpence to each town subscriber, whose paper is delivered each morning at his residence. The cost of the mere paper, laid down in the colony, was at this time stated to be over 1¾d. per copy, and the expenses were estimated at 1½d. more. On the occasion of each of the semi-weekly mail days, when editions for the country were further required, it was computed that sixteen miles of paper of the ordinary newspaper width

were issued from the office; and this mass being printed as usual on both sides, it thus formed thirty-two miles of printing.

This newspaper has all the appearance of still maintaining unimpaired that rapid progression I have indicated, to which indeed a more free development will be shortly given by the aid of superior mechanical appliances. and by adequate supplies of paper, which were ever falling short of the voracious demands, and which now form in the course of a year a quantity sufficient to freight entirely one of that immense fleet of shipping whose departure to her important offshoots of Australia is now a daily spectacle to the mother country. The whole case forms a remarkable exemplification, with reference to our parent state, of the comparative powers and possibilities of human development, and not by any means the only one furnished by our thriving colonies, in those departments relating to social progress and well-being—a development caused in no small degree by the freedom of the colonial press from injurious restrictions, trifling perhaps in their positive, but vast in their negative results, but also by features of a far less remediable character in the contrast of pinched and crowded home society, with the general material prosperity of colonial settlements.*

* Many of these particulars of the newspaper here referred to are matters of public notoriety. My information throughout is from

The education of the rising generation has not been a neglected subject in Victoria, as might be indicated by the discussion and difference of opinion as to modes of operation to which so important a duty has given rise The tendency among the colonial clergy of the various persuasions appears to be in favour of the denominational system, or that by which the children of each particular sect are instructed seclusively from others, so as to admit of the accompaniment of a full religious training, undisturbed by sectarian jealousies or apprehensions.

On the other hand, the views of the colonists, generally speaking, have a more liberal leaning, and dispose them to narrow down the religious sphere that besets educational codes, as being a part of the system eternally fertile in dissension The "national system," therefore, is finding favour among the colonial public; and in Sydney and other parts of New outh SWales this plan has been introduced under the countenance and pecuniary assistance of the local legislature, and with a great measure of success. This system is, with certain modifications, the same as that which the Home Government have introduced into Ireland, known as Lord Stanley's system, and calculated to

sources to be relied on. I have treated the subject as one belonging of right to the public, illustrative not merely of a particular private enterprise, but eminently characteristic of the place and the times.

unite at least the children of all Christian sects, by the use in the schools of only certain selections of Scripture. The denominational system, where it happens to be already established, is still supported in Sydney by state assistance, but additional public grants have been there made of late only to national schools.

In Victoria the denominational system still prevails, and has for the last five years been systematized through the medium of a "Board of Education," consisting of a chairman and four directors, who appoint an inspector of denominational schools, and award to the educational establishments of the various sects, when efficiently conducted, pecuniary assistance from the public funds proportioned generally to the number of attending pupils. This system is a decided improvement upon that which preceded it in the colony, by which all and sundry in the schoolmaster line drew a certain amount from government, provided they could scrape together a similar amount by private subscription, this evidence of "public support" being considered a sufficient certificate. The teacher's industry and genius were therefore much better rewarded when directed to the improvement rather of his subscription list than of his pupils. This system, which was soon productive of the grossest evils, gave decided dissatisfaction, and was abolished on the 31st

of December 1848, to make room for the present plan under the denominational board.

Very shortly after the formation of the denominational board, the national system also was introduced into Victoria, at that time the Port Phillip District, by means of a special mission from the board at Sydney. Little progress, however, had been made, and about a dozen schools only established, at the time of the first session of the Victoria legislature, when a local "National Board" was formed, to which considerable funds were afterwards voted, during both the first and the second sessions, towards the extension of this educational system.

The object with reference to either system of education, the national or denominational, was not to impart gratuitous education to children whose parents are in general well able to afford any reasonable costs, but to stimulate the public interest in the cause, by aiding, rather than entirely supporting it. Thus the national board are disposed to make up two-thirds of the sum necessary for a school-house, or, in other words, to give double the amount of private subscription. With the view of giving a good status to the schoolmaster, he is remunerated from a scale of fees chargeable upon the pupils, and still further by some additional amount awarded by the board.

The Victoria government, about the time of the first session of the legislature, appears to have had in contemplation the adoption of some uniform general plan of education. Nothing, however, was done at that time, and the legislature itself, as we have had occasion to see in the preceding chapter, took up the question by the appointment of a select committee, with the view of taking evidence and drawing up a report upon the subject.

Support from the public revenues is at present awarded to education under two systems, the denominational and the national, each system being administered by a separate board. In adverting to this position, the report of the committee at once condemns the continuance of these rival systems, and at the same time rejects the idea of supporting any one in particular to the omission of the other. It appeared to the committee from the evidence, that strong objections were held by large sections of the public against one or other or both together of these systems, and that any plan of amalgamation of the two boards was quite impracticable.

The grand object in view being the imparting of a sound literary and moral education, the committee propose that, instead of two separate boards, there be one board appointed for the promotion of education generally, without interference with religious teaching, further than as regards this direc-

tion, that in any school where such teaching may have been appointed by the promoters of the school, children whose parents are not agreeable shall not be compelled to attend during the hours of such teaching.

The committee recommend that the board be a lay body of four, appointed by the governor, with a chief inspector as a fifth member, whose position should be one of great consideration in the colony. There should be also several other inspectors. All schools applying for aid should conform to some general rules. They should be called Public Schools, their proceedings be open to public inspection, and comprise a plan calculated to impart sound secular and moral education, and to give such education during at least four consecutive hours per day. The object of the board should be to encourage large schools rather than numerous small divided bodies; and accordingly in populous towns schools with less than seventy, and in country districts with less than thirty scholars, should not be entitled to support, unless under particular circumstances which the board may adjudge.

No steps in the way of change have as yet, I believe, been taken in this very important question. The committee's report, under the circumstance of the present divided opinions on the subject of education, is very much what might have been looked

for. But the plan there recommended seems too favourable to the natural propensities of mankind to lapse into denominational or sectarian forms of education, and thus to perpetuate religious difference in departments of human intercourse which of all others it is desirable to keep free from this species of discord, and which are not of necessity narrowed by the obligations of religious principle. The scattered populations of colonies call for a general harmony that may admit of the combined efforts of all towards the great object of general education, perhaps in many places not attainable without this combination; but far more imperative is the call for the cordial intercourse of that rising generation which is erelong to occupy for its due season the busy stage of the world, and during that occupancy to impress with its own stamp the generations that come after it.

This educational discussion concerns schools receiving public support. Of seminaries essentially private the numbers are increasing at Melbourne. If they cannot be said as yet to answer the full requirements of the times, allowance must be made for the suddenness of recent social changes. Their number and status seem alike in the ascendant. There is still the custom of sending boys to the mother country to finish in the higher branches. But several good institutions at Melbourne, for both

boys and girls, have already acquired local distinction, while those established at Sydney enjoy a still higher consideration. An academical institution, projected about eight years ago on self-supporting principles, and managed by a committee selected from the parents or guardians of the pupils, did not succeed for more than two years; and the experiment, although then checked perhaps by incidents of a remediable character, has never since been repeated.

Those sentiments relating to general equality which manifest themselves in British colonies, are even more conspicuous in regard to religion than they are in politics. The colonist will suffer political dominancies much longer than he will tolerate those connected with religion. Both are unsuitable, but the last is particularly unbearable.

I have already, in the last chapter, alluded to the ground of civil and religious equality upon which the ecclesiastical system of the colony is based. This equality is not indeed perfect or universal in all bearings to every persuasion of colonists; for as regards a pecuniary aid awarded to the different sects by the state, while some sects conscientiously refuse this support, others, not embraced within the meaning of "Christian sects," are not legally entitled to its benefits. The equality, however, is preserved in other respects, so far as

regards the status of the different churches, no one church or persuasion having any privileges or official precedence over another. This is a point most jealously watched. An attempt made some years since in the colonial legislature to procure for the local ecclesiastical courts of the Anglican Church the power to summon witnesses, was summarily crushed by the public demonstrations of the angry colonists.

"The Queen's supremacy," with reference to the Church of England, has the appearance certainly of conferring some pre-eminence on that religious body; but from the other relations of that body, as well as of the other religious bodies, it is to be inferred that in the Australian colonies this distinctive appearance is merely nominal, embracing indeed some aspiring privileges as to Imperial appointments of bishops, but in all material respects causing no difference in the religious equality of the colonies.

With regard to this church, a bill was some years since introduced into the legislature with the view of giving a greater independence to the clerical body, by depriving the bishops of the control of the stipends of their clergy. The Bishop of Sydney was heard at the bar of the house against the bill, representing amongst other points the legal equality of all sects in the colony, each being left

to manage its own affairs without legislative interference. This objection was held good, and the proposed legislative interference was accordingly abandoned.

These foreign relations of the colonial Anglican Church, if one may so term the Imperial nominations to her colonial bishoprics, have a parallel even to a greater extreme in the case of the Roman-catholic Church. The colonial hierarchy of this church, appointed by the court of Rome, consists of an archbishop of Sydney, and of bishops of the several colonial capitals. The Anglican bishops, enjoying similar nominal titles, and from a source more legitimate, or at least more national, were disposed to question the privileges of Papal nomination; and it was not easy to reconcile these dignitaries of rival churches to that indifference with which, in these liberal times, the public and the government were alike disposed to regard these disputes. A question as to public precedence had also arisen between the respective heads of these churches, which was referred to the Home Government, and decided in that quarter with exemplary impartiality and courtesy.

The proverbial divisions of presbyterianism are not modified even by the distance of Australia from the modern headquarters of that form of church government. The home sects reappear in Victoria

Upon intelligence of the Disruption that had occurred in 1843 in the Scottish Establishment, a proposal had been made in New South Wales (then comprehending also Victoria) that the colonial presbyterian body, connected with the Church of Scotland as it previously stood, should still remain entire, holding relations with both of the home branches—the Free and the Established. For this course it was urged that no difference in doctrine was involved. that the cause of division in Scotland would never arise in Australia, and that this colonial church was an independent body, free to act as it pleased in the matter. But this compromising spirit was soon sent to the winds, by the strong interest experienced in the colony with reference to the point at issue at home, which assumed, even amongst the colonists, the aspect of a high religious principle. The party sympathizing with the Free Church were not themselves exposed to those scandals of patronage in the form of clergymen uncalled by their congregations, but they were disinclined to spiritual communications with those who were. It was evident that in the practical intercourse between the colony and the mother country, respecting, for example, the sending out of clergymen, relations could not be maintained simultaneously with two rival and in some respects hostile churches. A division therefore took place, and there are now

in the colonies the representatives of the Free and the Established Church of Scotland. This procedure was approved of by the latter bodies themselves, who seem each to have been prepared to denounce with contempt the temporizing policy at first mooted. The Free Church in Victoria, in a spirit of independence, to some extent the natural although not the necessary effect of the position and relations at home, has decided on rejecting the state aid; while the Church of Scotland section, in common with the greater part of the other Christian persuasions in the colony, continues to receive it.

The occasion of the last census of the colony in March 1851 gave the proportions of the different religious bodies. The Church of England comprised nearly one-half of the population, the Roman-catholics nearly one-fourth, the Presbyterians one-seventh, other Protestants nearly one-eighth. There were 361 Jews in a total population of 77,345. The non-christian persuasions formed altogether one-eightieth of the whole people, and the Catholic was to the Protestant as rather less than one to three. These proportions, which were found somewhat similar in the other colonies, are most probably still the same among the present greatly extended population of Victoria, and they are not dissimilar to the proportions of the various persuasions in the United Kingdom.

If variety in the religious views gives a healthful indication of mental activity, the colony may claim, in this respect, a happy fertility. The "Guide to Places of Public Worship in Melbourne and its Environs," considerately published by the local newspapers to direct the throng of new colonists, furnishes a long list of the different religious bodies and their places of meeting. Restricting ourselves to the limits of Melbourne, we find that the Church of England has five places of worship; the Church of Rome three; the Wesleyans three; Wesleyan Methodists one; Presbyterians altogether seven, but divided into four different bodies, namely, Church of Scotland two, Free Church one, Free Presbyterian one, United Presbyterian three; the Independents have two; the Baptists have six meeting-places for their different congregations; the Unitarians one, and the Jews one. Several of the church buildings, particularly those of the Roman-catholics and the Church of England, are structures of considerable extent, and creditable in appearance for the young colony.

Although the state gives pecuniary assistance to the different Christian sects, the religious system is, nevertheless, essentially that of Voluntaryism. The support of the state is merely an aid, proportioned to the private subscriptions raised by the members of each persuasion for the maintenance of their own

religious ministrations. The anomalous position in which this indiscriminate support places the government will probably, after a time, occasion the discontinuance of the system. On principles of civil and religious equality, the allowance has been claimed by the Jews, and it will probably be conceded, although not in accordance with the letter or intention of the Colonial Church Act. The thinness of the population of the interior, where local subscriptions might prove inadequate, has been argued in favour of this aid, as also the condition in which the colony has been placed since the late gold discoveries. These latter views have led for the present, however, to an increase of the state support, whose amount has lately been raised from its original sum of £6000 annually to £30,000.

The government have for some time defrayed the charges of several clergymen of the various persuasions for religious ministrations at the principal gold-fields. The great proportion of the mining population do not form, it may be supposed, a very apt congregation. The attendants upon public worship are usually but a small part of the diggers. But the ministrations of religion upon the gold-fields have undoubtedly an excellent general effect, and they tend materially to confirm an edifying observance of Sunday, in a general cessation on that day of the labour even of hunting for gold. If there is

not a respite from all manual occupation (for the strictness of the rule is not applied beyond the regular business of gold-seeking), there is at least a creditable example furnished by masses of an unsettled population, destitute for the most part of accustomed literary or domestic avocations.

Before concluding my labours, I would direct attention for a moment to a subject of great interest to the colonies, as regards alike their commerce and society, and now happily beginning to be viewed in a similar light in Britain. This is with respect to a cheap, uniform, and generally an improved ocean postal system. Colonists cannot be insensible to the exertions that are now being made in this country towards so great and desirable an object.

The happy results of a bold experiment at home may warrant expectations of success with reference to our colonies. The present colonial and foreign postage rates seem as if compiled with the one prominent object of taxing the ingenuity and perplexing the memory of the public. The rates, excessively high to begin with, are not only different for each place or distance, but they vary for the same locality, according to several different modes of conveyance. One may hope, too, that the antiquated indignity to Her Majesty's mails of leaving them in the far rear of every private despatch—of the spec-

ulator's and the railway company's express—may be remedied.

The Colonial Postal Question is now one of far greater import than the public may possibly be aware, who have been accustomed, with regard to some particular lines, to hear of nothing but expensive subsidies and merely nominal receipts. This case has of late, at all events, been sensibly altered, and with regard to Australia, to an extraordinary extent since the discovery of the gold-fields. The postage receipts for last year (1852) along the overland Indian route, including Australia, are understood to have very closely approached the whole amount of a heavy government subsidy to the steam company conveying the mails. How much greater must these receipts prove in the present year, and what is to be said of the future at the present rate of Australian development?

Let us take a few examples, illustrative of the extent of the present Eastern mails. The steamer Indus, which left Southampton for Alexandria on 4th September last (1853), received a mail of 380 boxes or forty-five tons of measurement, of which 260 boxes were for Australia; and this quantity did not include the letters sent subsequently by the Marseilles route, to be added to the general mail at Malta. The sailing ship Neleus, with the government mail for Australia, left Liverpool on the

16th of October last, with nearly thirty-five tons of this social and literary merchandise, consisting of 34,000 letters, and 62,000 newspapers, one-half of both being for the single port of Melbourne. On the Australian side the response has been equally vigorous. The Great Britain steamer, in her first return trip, brought from the Melbourne post-office 19,500 letters and 25,000 newspapers; while the steamer Harbinger, which left the same port some months afterwards (May 1853), brought 40,000 letters and 70,000 newspapers. Many other vessels, it must be remembered, were also simultaneously charged with mails, although not perhaps in numerous individual instances to the extent above alluded to. To complete this promising picture by a comparative illustration of Australian development, I quote the results of the Melbourne Post-office for the first six months of the years 1851 and 1853 respectively:—

	Six mo. 1851.	Six mo. 1853.
Letters	189,981	898,601
Newspapers	206,074	638,728

These data afford a happy premonitory note of a postal intercourse altogether unprecedented between England and her colonies—an intercourse which must now be needlessly depressed and inconvenienced by high rates of postage and irregularities of communication, and of whose important

bearing in the present and the future the arrangements of the hour seem altogether unworthy.*

My remarks now draw to a close. Leaving the colony I have been describing to continue its present forward movement, should I again, on some future visit to the mother country, or on any other future occasion, have the opportunity of writing its history, I may hope for a subject even more extraordinary and interesting than the present, and to be able to record the progress and proceedings of a people not unworthy, under all the circumstances of their position, to bear the honour of the British name, and to continue a portion of the British Empire.

* If there is any neglect with the Home authorities, real or apparent (for we are all familiar with late unforeseen steam-boat disasters which have seriously interrupted the Australian mails), it is only fair to acknowledge the defects of the Melbourne post-office, which appears now to be enjoying a fitting reward in the execrations of numberless distressed colonists.

APPENDIX.

Melbourne Chamber of Commerce.

REPORTS

ON

THE CONDITION AND PROGRESS OF THE COLONY OF VICTORIA,

SINCE THE

DISCOVERY OF THE GOLD-FIELDS.

CONTENTS.

PREFACE.

THE following Statements, which, as Chairman of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce on two several occasions, it was my part to draw up for that body, have been read with so much interest, that I am now induced to reprint them in this country. No writer has been more favoured in regard to a subject. I may hope also to make yet more generally known the condition and progress of a Colony that is at once the youngest, the most remarkable, and, in some respects, already the most important of the British dependencies.

The subject of greatest moment alluded to in these papers is the estimate of the gold produce. Since that estimate was published in February last, I have ascertained three different mistakes of quantity. They involve altogether an amount of 282,738 ounces of gold, which fall to be deducted from the total yield of the Victoria gold-fields, as estimated to the end of last year. In other respects I have to confirm all the various statements.

The first error arises from an over-statement of the quantity of gold exported from Sydney, which should have been

962,870 ounces, instead of 990,608, involving a difference of 27,738 ounces.

The second is from an over-estimate of the quantity of gold on hand in Sydney at 31st December last, which proved, upon subsequent inquiry, to be about 230,000 ounces, instead of 465,000, involving a difference of 235,000 ounces.

The third is an arithmetical error, which gave 364,913, instead of 344,913, involving 20,000 ounces.

The total quantity of gold produced, up to 31st December 1852, is thus diminished from 4,890,926 ounces to 4,608,188 ounces; and the value of this produce, taken at the rate of 77s. per ounce, is lessened by something more than one million sterling. For the whole period of gold-digging within the boundaries of Victoria, therefore—namely, from towards the end of September 1851 to 31st December 1852— there was raised altogether 4,608,188 ounces, valued (at the rate of 77s. per ounce) at £17,741,524, of which value about twelve and a half millions was exported during 1852, making up, with wool and other merchandise, an export value for that year of nearly fourteen millions sterling.

WILLIAM WESTGARTH.

LONDON, 2d *August* 1853.

MELBOURNE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Anniversary Address of the Chairman to the Members of the Association, on the occasion of the First Annual General Meeting at Melbourne, on 1st April 1852.

I HAVE the honour to address you on the occasion of this the first anniversary meeting of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce. The present time has been fertile in calling into existence these Institutions in this part of the world. The Sydney Chamber of Commerce was organized about the same time as our own, and in Adelaide, Hobart Town, and Launceston, similar associations have also been recently established.

Such an association forms a means of ascertaining and defining mercantile usage both local and general, whereby mercantile practice may be rendered more uniform, and mercantile differences determined by equitable arbitration. It is useful as a medium to express an opinion as to what are proper and customary mercantile charges, and accordingly a scale of such charges has already been issued by authority of this body. It is useful also to watch over the commercial and trading relations of the community among whom it is situated, and more especially as regards the policy that may

be pursued by the authorities with reference to the commercial questions of the day. With relation to this part of our duties, as you are aware, the attention of the Chamber has of late been called to the consideration of a new and more appropriate tariff for this colony, a subject which has been intimated to be under the present consideration of the Government.

In delivering to you this anniversary address, I trust it may prove only the first of an annual series, embodying a periodical view of the commercial and general progress of this colony. Such documents, written not only on the spot, but embodied in the day and hour as it were in which the circumstances they describe took place, may form for after-years a lively, interesting, and authentic memorial, useful alike to illustrate the history and legislation of our colony.

Among the events of our *official* year just concluded, are comprised several circumstances of the deepest importance to this colony: for example, the separation and independence of Victoria, lately a division of New South Wales; and the discovery of gold in this and the adjacent colony.

The new colony of Victoria, which dates her separate official existence from the 1st July last, has commenced her independence under circumstances highly auspicious. The prosperity or capabilities of a colony may, *cæteris paribus*, be tolerably well estimated by the proportion of its export produce to its population. The importance of exports consists in this, that they are the independent and permanent means in a colony of purchasing the imports. I need scarcely say that, for the economy and efficiency of labour, for the despatch of general business, for the comfort and embellishment of social life, it is widely different for us that innumerable articles of human wants are, during our pre-

sent early history, rather the finished workmanship of Manchester, Birmingham, or Sheffield, than the ruder attempts, however laudable in themselves, which, under other and less fortunate circumstances, it might have been necessary for us to make for our own well-being.

By means of our exports, therefore, we are enabled to introduce from other countries a quantity and description of articles that could not have been produced in equal measure and efficiency amongst ourselves by the extent of labour required for these exports, and that, most likely, in many instances, could not have been produced at all.

This is a consideration which forms to some extent a key to resolve the oft propounded problem as to the prosperity, the progress, and the social comfort of modern as compared with more early colonial experiences. When we compare with the present day the rudeness and discomfort of American colonization two centuries back, we must bear in mind that we compare a time when the fabrics of Manchester and Glasgow, and the hardware, machinery, and innumerable inventions and appliances of Birmingham and Sheffield, were, as regards cheapness and efficient construction and application, altogether behind the exhibition of the present day. When to this we add the facility, rapidity, and safety of navigation, and the ample market of our parent state and other parts of the world for our produce, together with the progress of taste and refinement that has accompanied our industrial developments, we may perceive that our colonial career is now placed under widely different and far more inspiring circumstances than those that attended the efforts of our ancestral fellow-colonists, whose rude-faring existence has long proverbially associated with colonial life ideas of inelegance and discomfort.

The history of Victoria is well calculated to institute an opposite and more cheerful proverb. Even prior to the discovery of her gold-fields, her export produce was proportionately larger than that which any other of our colonies has exhibited. For the year 1850, for example, when the value of colonial produce exported was £1,022,000, and the average population about 70,000 souls, we have an export at the rate of nearly £15 per head, which, for every person in the colony, gives a power for the introduction of all kinds of necessaries that must effectually promote at once the business of the colony, and the resources and enjoyments of its society.

Since 1850, the gold produce, which begins to affect our official figures on the export lists, towards the end of the following year, has largely increased this amount, threatening us, in fact, with a plethora of wealth, which, in the unsettlement of our regular industry, caused by the attractions of the diggings, may leave us, for a time perhaps, losers in a social point of view, by our present grand developments.

The Commercial Returns for the year 1851, in connexion with a comparison for previous years, are set forth in the following abstracts:

Table exhibiting the progress of the Colony of Victoria, from 1844 to 1851, inclusive.

Year.	Imports	Exports.	Total Trade External.	Population.
1844	151,000	257,000	408,000	24,000
1845	248,000	464,000	712,000	28,000
1846	316,000	425,000	741,000	34,000
1847	438,000	669,000	1,107,000	42,000
1848	374,000	675,000	1,049,000	50,000
1849	480,000	755,000	1,235,000	60,000
1850	745,000	1,042,000	1,787,000	70,000
1851	1,056,000	1,423,000	2,479,000	82,000

Table exhibiting the quantity of the principal articles of Export from the Colony of Victoria, for the years 1844 to 1851 inclusive.

Articles.	1844.	1845.	1846.	1847	1848.	1849.	1850.	1851.
Beef . . . Tons.	284	412	1,126	867	614	1,205	975	1,391¼
Cattle . . . No.	[illegible],435	3,538	4,925	6,057	6,696	5,168	5,287	6,281
Sheep . . . No.	44,515	28,320	31,107	54,585	64,191	55,670	57,422	69,224
Tallow . Tons.	429	377	112	561	1,345	3,482	4,489	4,223
Wool . . . lbs.	4,326,229	6,841,813	6,406,950	10,210,038	10,524,663	14,567,005	18,091,270	16,345,468
Gold . . . . oz.	...	...	..		.		...	145,137

The apparent falling off in the quantity of wool for 1851, as compared with the previous year, is occasioned by the lateness of the shipping of the wool this season, as compared with previous years, so that the usual proportion of the last clip has not been exported prior to January last. The official year terminates in the midst of the wool-shipping season, an arrangement inconvenient as regards the export produce, in not exhibiting so exactly as might otherwise be done in this particular, the annual progress of the colony.

The Gold Fields.—Let us now turn our attention for a space to the great commercial topic of the day. The discovery of gold in this and the adjacent colony, occurring as it has done within the last ten or eleven months, and passing with all its rapid effects like an incredible dream before our eyes, you are all familiar with. The observation of Mr Hargreaves, a colonist of New South Wales, who had recently returned from California, that the aspect of the vicinity of Bathurst resembled that of the gold regions of California, commanded instantaneous attention. The soil on trial yielded the expected treasure, and a general excitement for some time reigned throughout the colony. This has since subsided, or more properly, perhaps, it has been transferred to the richer gold fields of this colony.

"Prospecting," a term which this new order of things has conveniently introduced into our language, was vigorously carried on throughout Victoria, stimulated by the offer of a reward to the successful discoverer, subscribed for to the extent of two hundred guineas, at a public meeting held in Melbourne. Rumours of successful discovery floated down at intervals from many a hill and dale and winding creek of the interior, and small quantities of gold were frequently

exhibited, which, considering the now ascertained wide discovery of that metal, were in many instances no doubt actually collected by industrious prospectors at the localities they indicated.

In August a number of persons had established "diggings" on Anderson's Creek, 16 miles to the eastward of Melbourne, and many of the townspeople gratified their curiosity by visiting the newly found "Victoria Gold Fields." The month of September found the eyes of the colonists directed to the west, where the locality of Ballarat was then beginning to acquire its California reputation. In this month the Government weekly Escort was established from this place, to transport to Melbourne and Geelong the earnings of the colonists; and shortly before, a license-fee or charge of 30s. per month, as in New South Wales, was imposed upon all intending diggers, for the privilege of searching for and gathering the gold.

In October 7000 persons were congregated at Ballarat, upon an area of less than a square mile. The diggings presented a scene impressing the mind with the sense of a vast and incessant labour. At first the process was simply the removal and washing of the surface gravel, which yielded occasionally considerable fragments of gold, but afforded on the average rather indifferent remuneration. The subjacent "pipe-clay," or soft shale of a light bluish gray hue, was soon after regularly dug up and washed along with the gravel, and was found to yield more abundantly. The perforations of some diggers extended to a depth of 20 or 30 feet, and the labour was frequently protracted and severe in breaking through a coarse gravel, filled with large nodules or boulders of quartz, and cemented by an infiltration of

ironstone. In this celebrated "blue clay" the gold was sometimes found in irregular veins, consisting of a succession of specks or fragments so large as to be distinctly visible to the workmen when laid open by the pick-axe.

Success was very unequal, and very far from general, at Ballarat, and "prospecting" went on incessantly, in the hope of more propitious diggings. The superior richness of the Mount Alexander district became known during October. Ballarat was then the great metropolis. At the foot of "Golden Point" 3000 busy hands rocked the cradles that formed a continuous line for half a mile on either side of the small running creek; 3000 more were either digging or dragging down to the water the auriferous soil; while another thousand cooked the food for their comrades, or guarded their respective property in the upper region of the tents. Necessity and convenience gave names to "streets" which, winding among numerous canvass edifices, bore all the impress of traffic, but occasioned also some confusion by the variety of their fanciful appellations. At night the numerous fires gave an animated aspect to the scene, and permitted a boundless range to the imagination.

The celebrity of Mount Alexander has since far exceeded that of Ballarat, and latterly the continuous prospecting has led to the discovery of gold throughout an extensive area of the surrounding country. 50,000 persons are estimated to be now engaged on the diggings, nearly all of whom are at or around the Mount. The scarcity of water, usual at this season of the year, greatly limits, for the present, the yield of gold from so great a multitude, many having to cart the soil a distance of five or ten miles ere they can meet with water for the purpose of washing. The rains may be ex-

pected in June, and the capabilities of the soil will then be better tested. It must be borne in mind, however, that even yet, and probably for some time to come, the apparatus for extracting the gold is of the rudest and most inefficient construction.

These considerations, in connexion with the immense export of our gold-produce now taking place, must impress us strongly with the pre-eminently auriferous richness of our soil. If we compare the results of mining and washing gold in some of the old established seats of the precious metal, the results in Victoria are altogether astonishing. In Brazil, for example, the solid rock is crushed by machinery, for the purpose of extracting, by careful scientific treatment, a proportion of half an ounce of gold to one ton of stone. In the Russian dominions, the auriferous sands of the mines of Yegoro Kankuiski produce one pound troy to every 140 tons of material, those of Toulubinsk to every 190 tons, and the mines of Marynisk only the same to 213 tons of refuse. Our Victoria diggers, who grumble at an ounce or two to a cart load, who are grievously disappointed if half a cubic foot of earth is washed in a tin dish without yielding a few shillings' worth of gold, may, however, find consolation in reflecting that they are engaged upon a gold-field that is probably the richest hitherto known in the world.

Around Mount Alexander the diggings present much the same geological feature as those presented at Ballarat. In most places where gold has been found throughout the world, it is met with either imbedded in or associated with the older rocks. The quartz, one of these ancient formations of our earth, appears to be the prevailing matrix in this colony. The precious metal, in a variety of forms and dimensions, is

found either in or near the masses of quartz-rock that frequently obtrude upon the surface, or it is mixed with and subjacent to quartz in another form, namely, that of the gravel into which, by water-wearing and other accidents of time, the masses of the rock have been reduced.

As compared with most gold in the native state, that from Ballarat and Mount Alexander is remarkably pure and dense. In general it appears to be even purer than standard gold. Standard gold is gold artificially blended with certain other metals to render it harder for purposes of coinage, and made, in technical phraseology, "22 carats fine;" 24 carats being by custom and for convenience in comparison, taken as the representation of pure gold. The greatest density of gold is 19·3 to water as 1. The usual density of native gold varies from about 13 to 17½. That of the Victoria gold is generally towards the higher of these numbers.

Some difference has arisen as to the party entitled to claim the merit of this grand discovery. Mr Hargreaves, to whom I have already alluded, and the Rev. W. B. Clarke, have both asserted their claims. The latter stands forth as a man of science, who, during the last ten years, has repeatedly intimated to the world the auriferous character of this country. But as regards practical effect, there will ever be a wide difference between the mere scientific intimation of the existence of gold, and the announcement of an available gold-field. The intrinsic merits of individuals are another consideration. The Government, recognising such a distinction, have presented Mr Hargreaves with a pecuniary reward, and his name is undoubtedly to be associated with the discovery of commercial gold-fields in these colonies, and with the important consequences that must result from this circumstance to the destinies of Australia.

At the present moment, among gold-producing countries, California stands pre-eminent. It was anticipated that the produce of the past year would not fall short of fifteen millions sterling in value, and that of the present year may be taken at somewhat more. The annual produce of the Russian mines is estimated at four millions. Prior to the discovery of California, Russia stood most conspicuous in the production of gold. But already Victoria appears to be producing a larger quantity than the average of the Russian dominions.

The interest naturally excited by this new and leviathan produce will excuse some detail of particulars regarding it in this place.

The entire quantity exported from Victoria up to this date, the 1st April, is 563,471 ounces.

The following Tabular Illustrations exhibit: 1. The monthly quantity exported. 2. The places from which exported. 3. And the places to which exported:—

1. The quantity of gold exported from Victoria during each month, from the commencement of the discovery of the gold-fields till first instant.		2. Quantity of gold exported from Victoria to 1st instant, distinguishing the port of shipment.		3. Quantity of gold exported from Victoria to 1st instant, distinguishing the place to which exported.	
Month.	Ounces Gold.	Port.	Ounces Gold.	Exported to	Ounces Gold.
Aug. 1851 .	18	Melbourne..	482,874	London....	429,955
September.	nil.	Geelong....	77,027	Hamburg ..	3,411
October	1,548	Portland....	1,880	Sydney	122,584
November .	3,441	P. Fairy....	1,690	Hob. Town .	1,483
Dec. 1852 ..	140,128			Adelaide ..	6,038
January....	160,472				
February...	152,092				
March......	105,772				
Total...	563,471	Total...	563,471	Total...	563,471

The following particulars of gold, on official and private account, brought per Escort to Melbourne and Geelong, from 30th September last, when the Escort system commenced, to the end of February, have been obligingly furnished to me by the Colonial Treasurer. The month of March has been filled in from other sources, the official accounts not being yet completed for that term. It will be perceived that the amount brought down by Escort amounts only to about one-half of the quantity exported.

	Ballarat.	Mount Alexander.	Total in Ounces.
September 30 . .	121	...	121
October 2 . .	247	...	247
" 8 . .	2,298	...	2,298
" 15 . .	1 830	...	1,830
" 22 . .	2,708	...	2,708
" 29 . .	2,337	228	2,565
November 5 . .	4,719	965	5,684
" 12 . .	3,480	...	3,480
" 15 . .	2,737	6,443	9,180
" 26 . .	1,745	10,588	12,333
December 3 . .	2,886	13,783	16,669
" 10 . .	2,906	23,650	26,556
" 17 .	1,302	18,192	19,494
" 24 . .	779	10,077	10,856
" 31 . .	216	10,598	10,814
	30,311	94,524	124,835
January 6 .	117	10,957	11,074
" 12 . .	193	14,398	14,591
" 19 . .	59	12,000	12,059
" 26 . .	14	16,071	16,085
February 3 . .	5	11,872	11,877
" 10 . .	80	11,035	11,115
" 17 . .	13	12,287	12,300
" 24 . .	123	46	169
" 27 . .	...	21,784	21,784
	604	110,450	111,054
To 31st Dec. . .	30,311	94,524	124,835
To 31st March . .	1370	60,824	62,194
Total .	32,285	265,808	298,093

The following are the amounts of fees received for Licenses and Escort, to 29th February.

FEES FOR LICENSES.	To 31st Dec.			To 29th Feb.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Ballarat	7,447	14	0	855	10	0
Mount Alexander	17,979	5	0	29,283	0	0
Anderson's Creek	27	10	0			
Murray District . . .	27	10	0			
Total . .	25,481	19	0	30 138	10	0

ESCORT FEES.	To 31st Dec.			To 29th Feb.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Ballarat	827	10	0	13	7	0
Mount Alexander	2,777	7	0	3,144	15	0
Total .	3,634	17	0	3,158	2	0

The effects produced by the gold discoveries upon our social and commercial relations form a subject of constant and rather anxious discussion amongst us. With regard to our commercial interests, one of the most conspicuous features is the present state of

The Exchange on London.—The circumstance that our principal exports are shipped, not equally over the whole year, but during a particular season, and that not of very long duration, has hitherto caused a regular and considerable extreme in the rates of exchange on Europe. The influx of wool for example, during November to February, the demands for money against that produce, and the pressure of numerous bills drawn against the anticipated proceeds in Europe, and offered for discount to the banks and other buy-

ers, have the usual effect upon the value of these documents that an overstocked market has upon the value of articles that form the components of the overstock.

The extent of this periodical pressure during the four months above alluded to, had latterly involved about a million sterling prior to the present season. No particular inconvenience had ever been experienced, the imports having steadily crept on after the exports, and permitted of a beneficial adjustment of account by the aid of several banks of large means and undoubted credit in the community.

But the sudden demands in this market, remote as it is from prompt monetary assistance, of a new unexpected and enormous export produce, have caused, as might have been expected, an unprecedented effect. The value of gold exported in two months only, namely, in December and January last, was nearly as great as that of the whole annual export of general produce from the colony previously. The enlarged applications to the Banks have produced the customary effect in all such cases. The exchange on London has increased to ten per cent. upon drafts at 30 days' sight, and the rate of advance on gold has fallen from 55s. and 50s. per ounce, to 40s. Much of the pressure is withdrawn by this charge, as many parties will now prefer to await returns from London for their gold consigned there, rather than accept of present advances of money under such disadvantages, or force sales at prices which this rate of exchange has reduced. The Banks might perhaps with impunity advance beyond the means they happen to possess on the spot, but they are certainly in this event liable for claims which might be made upon them, and which, if made, they would, however solvent, be unable to satisfy until after communication with and returns from Britain.

In so sudden an increase of wealth in a small community—of wealth which, like the gold, is in the form of exportable produce—there is for some time no other means of meeting the pressure but by an adequate supply of money. Had our present enormous gold produce come gradually upon us, there would have already existed a natural reciprocity of proportionate imports of necessaries, conveniences, elegancies, and luxuries, to assist us in the business and enjoyment of life. But some time must now elapse ere the community can adjust itself to its new circumstances, and the great enlargement of its means. Imports adequate to the exports will gradually appear; but in the meantime, to the extent in some degree of the difference, the necessities of commerce will form a demand for money.

The gold is transported to England, whence it is returned to us in the form of coin. The risk, expenses, and delay are lost to the colony, and experience hitherto has enabled us to estimate this operation, with all its attendant agencies, at an average loss of not less than 20 per cent. As a saving in this respect, the advantages of a Colonial Mint have therefore not been unperceived. That privilege has not, however, been yet granted by law to the colonies. Our Australian public are busily occupied with the consideration of the subject. With one rather sudden and important exception, no actual step has been taken in legislation or Government on this subject. The recent enactment in our sister colony, South Australia, is the exception I allude to, and requires some notice at our hands.

South Australian Gold Act.—The object of this Act was to introduce, as nearly as possible, the benefits of a Mint into the colony; viz. to give to the Australian gold the

character of money, after its degree of purity had been officially assayed and indicated by a stamp. The value affixed, subject to a small assaying expense, was £3, 11s. per ounce, for a degree of purity equal to that of "standard gold."

The propriety or otherwise of this measure has been a subject of difference. In the colony itself, however, it appears to have found unanimous approval. All testimony seemed agreed that a great crisis had arrived there, by the sudden withdrawal of masses of the able-bodied population, and the consequent arrest of most of the industrial pursuits. The colonists were not, as in Victoria, oppressed with an excess of gold demanding money. The gold was in the adjacent colony, and they were anxious to hold out inducements for its transference to themselves. Hence the disposition to affix to the gold a high value. £3, 11s. was the rate fixed upon in Adelaide, while, at the same time, the price was about £3 in Melbourne, and £3, 3s. in Sydney.

The purpose of this measure has undoubtedly, to some extent, been answered. It eases off the shock of the crisis. It is attracting gold largely to the colony; and the over-valuation of the new currency, operating for a time to buyers from without, as a reduction in the price of merchandise in South Australia, an additional impetus has been given to the export business from that colony.

But undoubtedly this relative reduction in price, this arrangement by which gold worth 60s. in Melbourne will pass for 71s. in Adelaide, an advantage to Victoria, is in proportion a loss to South Australia, although not perhaps immediately perceptible. An exchange must gradually settle against the latter colony, in her intercourse with adjacent settlements, to the extent of the over-valuation of her new

currency, as she must shortly perceive when, in her turn, she may desire to effect purchases, or to remit money beyond her boundaries. The gold coinage cannot remain in free circulation unless at some higher valuation. The ingots may, by aid of law, be worth £3, 11s. in Adelaide, but if they are worth only £3 in Melbourne, the coin, which is of equal value in both places, will be exported to Melbourne, and the gold ingots left in Adelaide.

The disadvantages of the act will become more apparent when its period has arrived. There seemed to be gain at first, as is always the case, by an over-valued currency; but there now appears to be corresponding loss in a return to the former state. Loss is involved in the final resumption of payments in specie. The Banks have been ordered to issue their notes upon gold taken by them in exchange, at £3, 11s. per ounce. If the price of gold continues at its present disproportioned rate in Melbourne, these institutions must prepare for a storm of demands. But at length they must redeem these notes in sterling money, and then, having done so, they are left to dispose of the over-valued gold in the best way they can.

Hitherto, in treating of this Act, I have dealt chiefly with the over-valuing of the gold ingots. This was probably the great attraction of the Bill. It is, however, an accident rather than the principle of the measure, as the valuation might have averaged much more exactly the current market value. The grand objection to the whole enactment appears to me to consist in the uncertain position in which all commercial relations are placed by such sudden, extensive, arbitrary, and unforeseen tampering with currencies. This uncertainty must at once confuse every

calculation made by the capitalist from without, and prevent or restrict those remedial operations which he might otherwise have advantageously pursued, and which the colony so urgently requires. Such temporary currency measures might undoubtedly have the effect of restoring for their season a par exchange on London; but in doing so, they would tend to retard the ultimate remedy. The chief stimulus to this remedy is the exchange itself, for an exchange on London, as at present, at 10 per cent. discount, will soon attract to our market the restoratives of imported merchandise and money from the exhaustless reservoirs of Europe.

For these various reasons, I venture to condemn this step, taken by our sister colony; not holding it excusable even although a balance of good were possibly made evident for an individual case.

The Select Committee of the Legislature at Sydney, in reporting in December last upon the question of a proposed Assay Office and Mint in New South Wales, remarked that the establishment of an Assay Office in this colony did not appear to be any important acquisition; but they expressed their views that the colony would be a decided gainer by the establishment of a local branch of the Royal Mint, for the coinage, at a certain charge, of the gold produce.

The Banks and the Gold.—The Chamber was recently called upon, by request from without, to express its views as a commercial body upon the rumoured intention of the Colonial Banks to enter the market as purchasers of our new export. On this question you are aware that the Committee decided that mere rumoured intentions were not data on which to express any opinion, and they therefore

declined to entertain the subject. A public meeting of the commercial and trading classes, held in this apartment, at which, as Chairman of the Committee, I had the honour to preside, took this question into consideration, and framed a resolution, deprecating such a course as that which had been alleged. It appeared, on inquiry, however, that these institutions had not contemplated operations of this character. They had been buying the gold indeed, but with the view of substituting it for their large reserves of coin, and thereby so far relieving, with advantage to themselves no doubt, the pressure upon the public, from the inadequate supply of money.

Prospects of present Interests.—The intelligence of the Australian gold discoveries appears to have directed some serious attention in Britain to the prospects of the wool market, and some speculation in wools had taken place upon the news, in anticipation of a falling off in the usual supplies from this part of the world, which now forms the principal portion of the wools imported into Britain. The importance of this trade to our Parent State may be judged of when it is stated, that the wool from Australia now forms upwards of one-half of the wools imported into Britain from all parts of the world.

On this subject I may observe, that the condition of the wools of this season is, perhaps, in many instances, less favourable than for several past seasons, owing to the increased difficulties that have been experienced in procuring hands for washing and shearing the sheep at the most suitable period. The clip has also been brought down for shipment rather later this year than formerly. But with these exceptions we are aware that the scarcity and dear-

ness of labour, caused by the attractions of the gold-fields, have as yet but little, if at all, affected the quantity of wool exported during the season just now closing.

In future, however, from this and from other causes connected with the gold-fields, some effect is to be apprehended. The increased expense of labour has been met by retrenchment and economy on the part of flockmasters, who are running their sheep into larger bodies, and dispensing with supernumerary shepherds and hutkeepers. These operations usually affect the ratio of increase of the stock, a proportion of the young, when the sheep are in large flocks, being liable to perish during lambing, from inadequate attention and assistance.

Our anticipated great additional population also, which is already fast flowing into the colony, must gradually enact a change unfavourable to that facile extension of the wool produce which has hitherto characterized Australia, and rapidly promoted her welfare—unfavourable, however, only from the fuller development and the higher destinies of the colony, when, over many a tract of rich and available land, the human family will be substituted for the flocks and herds of the squatter.

But, on the other hand, we are not without considerations favourable to the extension of wool-growing. There are, for example, the economic arrangements that may take place for the increase of the herbage, and for spreading the luxuriant superabundance of spring over other portions of the year. Hay-making and the sowing of artificial and more productive grasses, are as yet unknown upon squatting stations, at least for pastoral purposes. Hitherto, in a thin population, scattered over an ample territory, necessity has

not pressed upon the energies of ingenuity and invention, to cause a deflection from the customary routine.

The anticipated great increase of population, and consequently of demand upon the live stock for supplies of food, together with the advance in the price of labour, are likely to operate in restricting the tallow trade of this colony, a branch of business which, as the Statistical Returns embodied in this address will show, has hitherto exhibited a rapid and prosperous growth.

Colonial Tariffs.--The recent political changes in these colonies—the extension of their various constitutions, seem to have induced a spirit of reform in the diversified and obstructive tariffs that have for some time restricted their mutual intercourse.

The different Chambers of Commerce have given this subject their consideration. Your Committee have discussed the question with reference to this colony, and have drawn up a proposition which it is intended should be submitted to the Local Government.

We have communicated on this subject with the respective Chambers at Hobart Town and Sydney, and I have much satisfaction in intimating a conformity of views between these several bodies and ourselves. The general principles are alike in all. All have adopted, as far as practicable and consistent with revenue purposes, those principles of commercial freedom, in the pursuit of which our Parent State is now setting us so decided and beneficial an example. Duties that might operate "protectively," causing loss of revenue and misdirection of labour and capital, have therefore been as far as possible avoided.

The principle adopted has been, that only a small number

of imported articles should be subjected to duty, all others being left free. These selected articles are necessarily such as are of large and general consumption among all classes, in order to provide an adequate revenue; and the condition of all classes in this and the adjacent colonies is happily such as to admit of their equal contribution to the general Government. A preference has been given to fixed rates of duty over the *ad valorem* principle.

The following tabular arrangement exhibits in juxtaposition the propositions of the respective Chambers of Commerce, for a scale of Customs Duties for the undermentioned colonies:—

	Victoria.		N. S. Wales.		V. D. Land.	
	S.	D.	S.	D.	S.	D.
Brandy, gall.	5	0	6	0	12	0
Other Spirits, do.			3	6	9	0
Wine—						
In wood, do.	0	9	0	6	1	0
In bottle, do.			0	9	2	0
Tobacco, lb.	2	0	1	6	2	0
Sugar						
Raw, cwt.	2	4	2	6	3	0
Refined,					6	0
Tea	0	1½	0	1½	0	3
Coffee	0	1½	10s. p. ct.		0	1½
Beer –						
In wood, gall.	nil.		0	2	0	2
In bottle, do.					0	6
Dried Fruits	...		nil.		0	1
Hops	...		...		0	2

The larger revenue requirements of Van Diemen's Land, have occasioned the affixing of higher rates of duty than are deemed necessary in the other colonies. That colony has been the first to carry out the new tariff arrangements, the Legislature having passed an Act to that effect, which

embodied the propositions of the Hobart Town Chamber, and came into operation towards the end of February. The Local Governments of Victoria and New South Wales have respectively intimated their intention of bringing forward improved Tariff measures. On this subject, with regard to this colony, your Committee have communicated, with mutual satisfaction, with the Customs Authorities.

Population.—The Census Returns, furnished every five years, are before us for March 1851. They show us that the population of Victoria has considerably more than doubled itself within the last quinquennial interval, namely from 32,879 to 77,345. These numbers do not include the small and diminished body of the Aborigines, which, although more numerous formerly, probably does not now comprise more than 3000 individuals within the boundaries of Victoria.

Since the date of this last Census, the repute of our gold-fields has caused an extraordinary influx of people from the adjacent colonies, computed to have averaged for the last four months, from 6000 to 8000 persons per month. The population, therefore, cannot now fall short of 115,000 persons, nearly 50,000 of whom may be computed to be scattered over the interior, upon the various mining localities, engaged in the toilsome, irregular, and uncomfortable, but often highly lucrative vocation of gold-digging.

The population of Melbourne has increased from 10,954 in 1846, to 23,143 in 1851. The increase of Geelong is still more striking, namely, from 2065 in 1846, to 8291 in 1851. The absorption of the labouring population by the attractions of the gold-diggings has arrested for the last six months the extension of these towns, previously going

on at a rapid rate, and also various other useful courses in the march of general progress. But, on the other hand, the streets of the capital are thronged with the incessant influx of new colonists, and with all the evidence of extensive, increasing, and profitable commerce.

The following Tables illustrate the circumstances of our population under two important points of view, namely, the proportion of the sexes, the country where born, and the religious persuasion; and a comparative view is at the same time afforded of the like particulars as regards the population of the adjacent colonies, with the exception of South Australia, whose returns I have not been able to obtain:—

PROPORTION OF SEXES.

	Victoria.	N. S. Wales.	V. D. Land.	Totals.
Males	46,202	106,229	43,127	195,558
Females . . .	31,143	81,014	25,482	137,639
Total . .	77,345	187,243	68,609	333,197

COUNTRY WHERE BORN.

	Victoria.	N. S. Wales.	Totals.
In the Colony	20,470	81,391	101,861
England	28,908	51,122	80,030
Wales	377	558	935
Ireland	14,618	38,659	53,277
Scotland	8,053	10,907	18,960
Other British Dominions .	3,425	1,955	5,380
Foreign Countries . . .	1,494	2,651	4,145
Total . .	77,345	187,243	264,588

RELIGIOUS PERSUASION.

	Victoria.	N. S. Wales.	V. D. Land.	Totals.
Church of England .	37,433	93,137	45,073	175,643
Presbyterians . . .	11,608	18,156	4,485	34,249
Wesleyans	4,988	10,008	3,772	18,768
Other Protestants, &c.	4,313	6,472	2,379	13,164
Roman Catholics . .	18,014	56,899	12,444	87,357
Jews	364	979	435	1,778
Mohammedans, &c. .	201	852	21	1,074
Other Persuasions .	424	740	...	1,164
Total . .	77,345	187,243	68,609	333,197

Exclusive of 953 Military (including women and children), and 568 Convicts on public works.

Steam Communication with Europe.—The long deferred question of Steam Communication between Britain and Australia has been once more revived by the Home Government. The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty advertised last November for tenders for a steam communication between Singapore and Sydney. This was to be bi-monthly only, but it was supposed to be under consideration that during the alternate months a steamer should start for Australia *via* the Cape. The Singapore route was to be by the way of Swan River and Port Phillip, instead of the more dangerous passage of Torres Straits. The most recent intelligence from Britain, namely, up to the end of December last, gives the note of preparation as more and more distinct upon this long expected and important communication.

This subject was discussed by the Legislative Council of this colony during the past session. A bonus of £3000, yearly, for three years, was voted, to be held in readiness

for the benefit of the parties who first introduced a steam communication, at least monthly, with Britain, and a strong expression of preference was given to the line *via* the Cape, as the most suitable for the great passenger traffic of this colony, that might reasonably be anticipated to result after receipt of intelligence of our extraordinary gold discoveries. Our adjacent sister, New South Wales, has agreed to appropriate a like amount towards the same desirable object.

The Isthmus of Panama has acquired a celebrity as the grand impediment in the highway of nations. But the wants of society, in its incessant modern locomotion, have at length put a remedy in operation, and a railway is now being constructed between the two oceans. An American company have undertaken this business, and their shares are stated to be in request by the public. They have chosen Navy Bay as the terminus on the Atlantic side, Panama being that on the Pacific. Hereafter this may prove a frequented route for Australian colonists. The completion of the undertaking is looked forward to for March or April next year; and in the meantime these ports are already crowded with passengers proceeding to and returning from California.

The Transportation Question.—The address to a commercial association may not generally embrace subjects of a social and moral character. But the position of our colony is peculiar; and I trust, too, that it is unnecessary to plead that the material interests of society are not more to be aimed at than its virtue and happiness.

I am the more encouraged to allude to the absorbing question of Transportation, because I feel that not only in this Institution, but throughout the entire colony, there is

but one sentiment on the subject. Truly it is an enormous evil that into the bosom of these our rising societies, there should be thrust the thousands of criminals annually ejected from the vast population of a mighty empire.

The evil does not enter by direct communication with the Mother country. But experience has repeatedly taught us, that Transportation to Van Diemen's Land is simply Transportation to Victoria in another and not by any means a less objectionable form. In this great question the interests of these Colonies are identical.

We have recently received, through an undoubted channel, a statement emanating from a principal member of the Home Government, purporting that the system of Transportation is still to be continued to this part of the world. Our Australian colonies are already, from the effects of this system, overcharged with criminal elements, which, under our altered circumstances, with reference to the discovery of gold, are now presented with additional opportunities and inducements to break forth into every vice and atrocity. We had hoped that these discoveries would have effectually settled this question. But by an extraordinary perversion of reasoning, an opposite conclusion appears, from the statement alluded to, to have been arrived at.

The accumulating evils resulting from such a system, the overwhelming with criminals our small and struggling societies, had several years since forcibly arrested the attention of the Home Government. In a penitential moment a pledge had been extracted that a system, in its results alike disgraceful to the British name, and terrible to the interests of humanity, should altogether cease. This pledge was first neglected, and now it has been denied. The penitence may

have passed away, habit may have reconciled even the darkness of this picture; but the evil is not thereby removed, and it has now assumed even a more alarming aspect.

The "promise" has displayed the duty and intention then, as it ought to have been still, on the part of the Home Government, to terminate this destroying system. But without further reference to that incident, or to the question of either the power or the legal right in the Home Government thus to dispose of the convicts, let us proceed to assert, that a far higher law than the accidents of human statutes guards the social, moral, and religious interests of society; nor can any civilized Government stand excused on such grounds for wilfully persisting in a course which, on authentic evidence, long since and repeatedly tendered and acknowledged, has exhibited the phases of society in appalling blackness, and developed scenes of infamy and atrocity that are, perhaps, unparalleled in the history of man.

Let us hope, therefore, that this resolve, emanating as it has done solely from the Right Honourable Secretary for the Colonies, may prove but the injudicious and obstinate purpose of a single mind, not the active persistence of the general Government, and still less the deliberate resolve of that great nation, of which we are proud to consider ourselves a part.

I cannot conclude without alluding, in the strongest terms, to the noble prospect lying before us. Our colony is in the midst of a race of unexampled progress. An exuberant nature has lavished upon us unbounded resources. It is for our colonists to meet these auspicious circumstances by promptitude, energy, and liberality, in the path of im-

provement, in order that the full benefits of our position may be realized. In departments affecting commerce, it is the especial duty of this society to take a prominent position. Our port is crowded with shipping pouring into our colony the innumerable requisites of society, in which every class and every individual has a direct, and to a great extent an equal interest; but from the total inadequacy of our arrangements, all business connected with this department is carried on at an enormous sacrifice and waste. This is a consideration for governments, and for public bodies like ourselves. Time is valuable; most persons are incessantly occupied with their own affairs; individual complaints, and individual exertions, therefore, are comparatively few and ineffectual; but delay, expense, and obstruction on every hand, are not the less swelling up an enormous account altogether adverse to the interests of the colony. Our neighbours of South Australia have in these respects set us an example. Inferior now in natural resources, they have, as it seems to me, surpassed us in energy of character, on the part both of Government and people. The misfortunes of 1840 and 1841, with which they were bowed down, had scarcely passed over ere they appear again erect and prosperous before us, as producers of the finest wheat on the London Corn Exchange—an expression equivalent, I may add, to that of the finest in the world. The gold-fields of Victoria have again depressed them; but they are up and doing as before to make the best of what is left. Our highly auriferous soil is an accident, but the immediate projection of a road between Adelaide and Mount Alexander is a principle; and the first escort that traversed the new line, bringing with it £21,000 worth of gold, gave alike the triumph and the reward of

such energy. We have everywhere great duties to accomplish, in order to derive the fullest effect from a bounteous nature. The prospect before us, I repeat, is noble: but it is in intimate association with our own industry, enterprise, and perseverance.

MELBOURNE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Anniversary Address of the Chairman to the Members of the Association, on the occasion of the Second Annual General Meeting, at Melbourne, on 1*st April* 1853.

WE are now assembled for the purpose of indicating by the usual annual address, the second anniversary of our Society. In the absence from the colony of my friend Mr Bell, our esteemed president for the year under review, whose part it would otherwise have been to appear now before you, the honour has devolved upon me, as his predecessor in office, to deliver this address. I may congratulate myself on the important bearing of the materials that are now available before me for such a duty; and not less so on the interest which a document of this kind, issued under the authority of the Chamber, may be expected to arouse in many parts of the world, where a lively attention is already directed to this colony by the marvellous accounts of the produce of its soil.

Having already, in February last, submitted to the Chamber a Minute on the progress and commerce of this colony, embracing the year 1852, a copy of which is appended to

this address, it will be unnecessary for me to go over a second time a great variety of statistical details, that would otherwise have been requisite to illustrate the position and progress of the colony. I need hardly observe to you, who are witnesses with myself to our crowded harbour, our busy streets, and the enormous prices now current for most descriptions of property, that this progress in population, wealth, and commerce, which has been reviewed at length in the Minute just alluded to, continues unabated for that portion of the present year that has as yet passed over us. It will be sufficient in this place to pass under review some of the more prominent facts, as developed in that document.

Summary of Progress.—The population of the colony had been more than doubled within the interval of one year; namely, from 95,000, the estimated number at the end of 1851, to 200,000 at the end of the following year. The shipping inwards had risen during the same space, from 669 vessels in 1851, with a tonnage of 126,000, to 1657 vessels in 1852, with a tonnage of 408,000.

The increase of the public revenue is still more striking, aided as it has latterly been by the great increase in the amount derived from the sales of the public lands, and from the proceeds of the licences for digging gold. In 1851 the amount was £380,000, being a great increase on preceding years: in 1852 it had increased to no less than £1,577,000.

The customs receipts of the past year formed the considerable item of £342,000, or nearly one-fourth of the whole revenue. The estimate under this head, officially taken in the previous year, was far exceeded by the realities of our increasing commerce. The estimate of this branch of the revenue for the present year is stated, by the latest official

calculations, at £639,000: but present experience will safely warrant a great extension of this amount, as the results of the first quarter, just ended, indicate already a revenue at the rate of £520,000 per annum. The estimated customs revenue of New South Wales for the same year is £222,000. I believe I shall not exaggerate the commercial position of this colony when I state that its present customs revenue, under tariffs averaging no very material inequality of conditions, exceeds that of all the other Australasian colonies put together, including even the remoter settlements of New Zealand and Western Australia.

The returns of the export and import commerce are, generally speaking, the great index of the position and progressive powers of a colony; the first showing the relative extent of ability to introduce from without what is not to be had within, at least to the same advantage; the second being the indication of the extent to which these powers, in the main so beneficial, are being made available. For the year 1851, the value of imports amounted to £1,056,000; for the following year the amount had increased to £4,044,000. The increase in the amount of the export produce for the same period is still more striking, namely, from £1,424,000 to £7,452,000.

But with regard to this amount of nearly seven millions and a half as the value of the exports for the past year, large as it may appear, the sum has been ascertained to be very far short of the actual truth. The greater portion of our colonial export produce now consists of gold, and it may readily be apprehended that a large quantity of this commodity is constantly being exported from the colony without any official record. The Customs returns gave 1,975,000 ounces

as the quantity exported for the year 1852; but an additional quantity of 1,600,000 ounces had been traced into the adjacent colonies, or otherwise exported, without official record. It may also be remarked, that the quantity of gold, as officially recorded, was valued at the very low rates that were then temporarily current. A careful estimate on this subject, exhibited in the minute alluded to, gave as the value of export produce raised in Victoria during the year 1852, no less a sum than eighteen and a half millions sterling. But deducting the quantity of gold assumed to have been on hand throughout the colony at that date, this amount is reduced to £14,880,000, or about twice the amount set forth in the official records of the Custom House.

The most interesting feature in our commercial retrospect is the quantity of the gold produced in Victoria, after the lapse of so brief an interval since the discovery of her mines. A careful calculation on this point has enabled me to estimate the quantity produced up to the end of last year, at 4,891,000 ounces. I may observe that no material quantities of gold were discovered until towards the end of September 1851; and this amount of nearly five millions of ounces is therefore the result of only fifteen months of our initiatory gold digging.

The prior discoveries of California have now, to some extent, familiarized the world with descriptions of such quantities of gold; but excepting this recent experience, the production of this precious metal, on a scale of such magnitude, has been altogether unexampled. For some time preceding the California discoveries, the annual quantity of gold produced throughout the world had been estimated, somewhat variously indeed, at about eight millions sterling.

The quantity raised in Victoria, during the first fifteen months of her mining operations, may be similarly valued at twenty millions.*

I may here conclude this commercial summary, by giving the quantities of gold brought down by escort from the interior, during the first three months of the present year. They indicate a considerable falling off, as compared with some previous months, when the supply of water, as usual in spring and summer, was more abundant. As compared with the same months of the previous year, however, the quantity for the present year is very large, averaging about three times the former amount. The following are the monthly quantities received by escort, together with the quantities exported, according to the Customs returns, for each of the last three months:—

By Escort.		*Exported.*	
January	186,015 oz.	January	266,663 oz.
February	172,329 „	February	189,675 „
March	169,654 „	March	160,423 „

* I would here remark, with reference to the general estimate of the gold produce, as taken from the Minute referred to, that I have since received some particulars from Sydney relative to the quantity of Victorian gold that I had assumed to have reached that market without record. The quantity in the different banks there on the 31st December was a little under 200,000 ounces: so that, after a due allowance for what might be in the hands of dealers and others, the total of 465,000 ounces, as set down by me, is probably twice the quantity actually on hand at the time. The quantity exported from Sydney also, as per official returns up to the same date, was 962,870 ounces, instead of 990,608, as stated in the Minute. These differences make, together, a reduction on the whole quantity of about 250,000 ounces; but I believe the original total estimate may still be relied on, as I incline to think that the estimates with reference to quantities on hand in this colony on the 31st December last, enormous as they may already appear, are still rather short of the truth.

Comparative Results.—The value of the produce of this colony actually exported in the year 1852 was, in round numbers, fifteen millions sterling. With so encouraging a fact, we may venture upon an interesting research, and compare the results of the commerce of Victoria with those of several other instances that are naturally suggested to the mind by our own present position and more recent history.

1. California is our great competitor in the production of gold. The latest statements that have come into my hands on the subject of the gold produce of that country are up to March of last year. California had then entered the sixth year of her golden harvests, whilst Victoria had attained the second. At that time the produce of gold, the sole export produce of California, amounted in value, by official record, to twelve millions sterling annually; and to this quantity, it was estimated, that one-fourth should be added for the unrecorded export: making a total of fifteen millions sterling, the amount which we have just ascertained to be the annual value of the export of the colony, about the same period.

2. Among British colonies, those of India have hitherto stood first, as far exceeding all others in the magnificent scale of their wealth and commerce. The exports for the year 1851 from Calcutta, the capital and seaport of Bengal, the greatest of these Indian Presidencies, amounted in value to £11,040,000, or rather less than three-fourths of the amount of the export of this colony for the year succeeding.

3. To proceed to still higher standards of comparison, let us take the export commerce of Britain itself. The average annual value of the exports for the four years, 1848 to 1851, amounts to £65,565,000; so that the value of the export

produce of this colony already approaches to one-fourth that of the parent state.

These different statements and illustrations are not to be regarded in the light of mere vainglorious boasting or rivalry. If such could be allowed under any circumstances, it is least so under those by which we are surrounded. Our auriferous soil, which has raised us so instantaneously, is not the creation of enterprise or genius; and the discovery of gold-fields in adjacent colonies, even more productive than our own, (an occurrence not at all unlikely,) may deprive us with equal precipitancy of that supremacy we have now entered upon. It may be permitted to us to regard these vast resources of this colony as a means with which we are privileged for the accomplishment of great and useful purposes, to promote eventually the general welfare; and I am happy in the opportunity of now illustrating the unexampled progress of the colony in this the still early dawn of her remarkable fortunes.

Effects of the Gold.—The effects of the gold discoveries upon the colony are well illustrated by the extraordinary progress of Melbourne, its capital. The precipitate influx of wealth, commerce, and population, has naturally conduced to a concentration of all these elements at the chief port. The harbour off Williamstown now exhibits the lively spectacle of one hundred three-masted vessels, simultaneously riding at anchor, besides steam-vessels and a large assemblage, both there and at the wharves of the city, of the smaller shipping. All the principal streets are thronged with passengers, and with vehicles of every kind; while the lines of ascending dust which the eye traces far into the interior, attest the incessant traffic to and from the capital along the two great highways, to the north and the north-west,

leading to the principal gold-fields of the Ovens and Mount Alexander. By the census of March 1851, Melbourne then contained 23,000 inhabitants. The numbers who have since incessantly arrived have filled up the limited town accommodations, and overflowed into the suburbs. Melbourne and its immediate outskirts may now be estimated to contain nearly 80,000 persons.

But although the flood-tide of progress has comparatively swept aside from the smaller towns and various other places of the colony, the wealth that has resulted from the gold discoveries has gradually penetrated throughout the entire country, stimulating commerce by the united effects of the great increase of demand for produce, and the progressive rise in the money value of all kinds of fixed property.

'The progress of Geelong has thus been scarcely less marked than that of Melbourne itself. Situated on the shores of a spacious and secure haven, its superior commercial advantages are likely, ere long, to be fully developed by the removal of the natural bar at the entrance to the inner harbour, which has hitherto prevented the ingress of the larger shipping. The population of Geelong and its suburbs is already estimated at 20,000, having advanced to this extent from a population of 8000 two years previously. The great importance recently acquired by the Ballarat gold-fields will still accelerate this progress of our sister town. The intercourse now accomplished by daily steamers will shortly be enhanced by railway communication. Under the present circumstances of the colony, a brief interval will suffice to exhibit two populous and wealthy cities upon the shores of our inland harbour, where but eighteen years before were only an uncultivated waste, and a few scattered tribes of the lowest grades of our race.

Enterprise and Improvement.—The Legislature during its late session has sanctioned three different railway projects for the colony. By one of these undertakings, Melbourne is to be brought into direct connexion with the shipping in the harbour, by means of a railway to the beach two miles in length, and a further extension upon a jetty into water of sufficient depth for the largest vessels. A second unites the capital with the gold-fields of Mount Alexander and Bendigo, having in view, also, a continuation to the river Murray, and ultimately to Sydney, by a junction with the railway that has already been commenced on that side. The third undertaking is the Melbourne and Geelong railway, already alluded to.

In the case of the first of these important measures, contracts have been entered into, and various portions of the material have already arrived from adjacent colonies, or have been ordered from Britain. The two last have received the guarantee of the Colonial Government, securing a minimum dividend of five per cent. for twenty-one years, and the colonial public may therefore rely upon a prompt supply of the requisite capital.

In some other important particulars, the colony begins to rise to its resources, to receive its due attention from without, and to meet the emergencies of its position. Steam communication by several different companies and by different routes has been established with Britain. The various ports of the adjacent colonies, including at length Hobart Town and Adelaide, are now also connected by steam. There has been a great extension of banking facilities, including the establishment of a local institution on a considerable scale, the bank of Victoria. The amount of £720,000 has

been voted by the local Legislature for the public works of the present year, besides adequate amounts for the establishment of a University and Public Schools, and of a Public Library. There is also the prospect of the speedy establishment of a Museum of Economic Geology, to furnish to our innumerable prospecting colonists some practical guidance for the discovery of our mineral wealth.

Gold Diggings Regulations.—One subject of great public consideration under the new features of our colony has been that of the regulations under which gold-digging may be permitted by the Government. In this department of the Government no actual change has been effected upon the regulations originally adopted here, and suggested to our Government by the prior example of New South Wales.

"The monthly licence fee of thirty shillings for each digger, the charge originally imposed, continues to be levied. The mining population have now become used to this charge, and they experience the benefits of official surveillance in the protection that is awarded to their respective "claims." A more recent order, made with the view of facilitating capitalists and gold companies, permits of the occupation for long intervals of small portions of land in auriferous localities, that are not otherwise in actual use; but this desirable system has not yet come into actual operation. An additional charge upon gold-digging was contemplated by the Colonial Government in the indirect form of an export duty upon gold to the extent, as proposed, of 2s. 6d. per ounce; but this project, after considerable debate, was rejected by the Legislature. It was apprehended that an article so easily smuggled over a vast and unguarded frontier, might, to a large extent, be diverted to other markets by

the operation of this proposed duty, in relatively reducing the price in our own. The strong protest of the miners also reasonably urged that this double tax was excessive upon a vocation pursued under many privations, and attended in its average results with rewards not superior to those of other colonial enterprises.

The present Mining Act of New South Wales was recently passed by that body after the management of the gold-fields had been transferred to the Council. Its provisions have met with considerable opposition, which may induce hereafter several modifications, should experience continue to develop unfavourable results. The mines of the sister colony are in general more remote from the chief seats of population than in Victoria, the rewards appear to be more equal, and the enthusiasm to be less, in proportion to the rarity of brilliant individual instances. Calculations are therefore more nice in proportion as the business of gold-digging is more methodically followed, and the charge of 30s. per month is considered oppressive. A tax has further been imposed upon all the residents within the limits of a "proclaimed gold-field;" and a double licence-fee is imposed upon foreigners. There is also a clause for the protection of employers, which permits any digger to be regarded as an absconding servant, unless producing direct proof to the contrary.

Realization of Gold.—It may be interesting to our colonists to learn the usual course of procedure in the realization of our gold produce in London, the great market to which nearly the whole of it is transmitted. The circumstance that gold is the material of our money, invests the inquiry with a peculiar interest, while at the same time it gives to

this commodity a summary simplicity in all its commercial career. This happy relationship will effectually prevent that "fall in the price of gold" that is so often apprehended as the result of our prolific diggings, but which can never occur so long as gold is simply bought with gold. This fixity of price does not, however, guarantee any fixity in the relative value of gold. Our Mount Alexander produce will always command at the mint £4 sterling per ounce; but a great production of gold throughout the world may hereafter materially reduce the value of the four pounds.

According to the practice at the British Mint, a "seigniorage," or mint charge, although levied in the case of silver, is not chargeable upon gold—a practice, we can suppose, that may now occasion much unnecessary coinage. All gold therefore which is received at the mint in a state ready for coinage, namely, of the purity of twenty-two carats, is returned in coin, weight for weight, to the owner,—the return thus made being at the rate of £3, 17s. 10½d., or within a fraction of 3·9-10ths sovereigns for every ounce. Pure gold, by an old habit in gold countries, and for the sake of comparative illustration, is described as 24 carats fine, "standard gold" being an alloy of certain metals to the extent of two carats, for the purpose mainly of giving hardness to the metal, and a better adaptation for currency. As inconvenience might arise both to government and the public if every one indiscriminately brought his gold to the mint, the practice has been beneficially established of passing the gold through the Bank of England, leaving the mint to deal with that one institution only. For the bank's agency in this business, and for time lost in the negotiation, the bank is permitted to charge 1½d. per ounce; that is to say, it pays

on demand to all applicants at £3, 17s. 9d. per ounce of standard gold, while the exact proportion, weight for weight, in coined sovereigns is £3, 17s. 10½d.

Until lately, not only the ready prepared standard gold, but any gold in its natural state was receivable at the mint, where, prior to coinage, it was duly reduced to the standard composition, and accounted for accordingly. The Bank of England had therefore the same custom. Now, however, in consequence of the large arrivals of this metal, and the expense and delay entailed by assaying and reducing, this practice, which is not compulsory by law, (at least, according to official views, for this is a point in dispute,) has been discontinued, and it is now necessary, on the part of the gold-seller, to have the metal first reduced to the standard. This requirement of the mint has also become a requirement of the bank, and the new practice involves a small additional charge upon the gold.

Fluctuations in Prices.—The example of California has familiarized us with the extreme fluctuations in the prices of merchandise that might have been anticipated in a country plentifully supplied with gold, or, to speak more correctly, in a country that has been suddenly plunged into immense wealth. The ample means in the hands of the people, the speculative tendency induced among the commercial interests, the enormous prices suddenly attained by particular articles apprehended to be scarce, and often as quickly lowered by the deluge of supply poured in from other markets, —all these features and their various effects have begun to exhibit themselves in Victoria, and in these colonies generally.

In order to illustrate this part of the subject, I have drawn up the following table, showing a monthly range of prices of some of the principal articles of merchandise imported or produced in the colony. In some instances the fluctuations have been inconsiderable, and not beyond the customary scope prior to the gold discoveries; in others they have taken a much wider range. Some articles of agricultural produce that are not in the list of our customary imports from the large markets of Europe, and whose supply therefore has depended upon the limited field of the adjacent colonies, have experienced the greatest vicissitudes. Thus potatoes have risen to enormous prices; hay has simultaneously been dearer, weight for weight, than the best quality of flour, and oats in the same manner have been twice the price of the best imported oatmeal. Gold and wool have been included for the purpose of completing the list; but the price of these articles, which are the main export produce of the colony, depends upon circumstances in some respects of a different character from the relations of supply and demand that affect the others, namely, upon the prices in the Home market, and the exchange relations with London. (*See Table apart.*)

The following list of the current retail prices of various necessaries of life, afford evidence, from their generally extravagant rates, of the effects produced by the gold discoveries on this particular department of industry. Cabbages at one shilling and sixpence each, with all the other array at rates almost equally alarming, is not, we must hope, to be always the state of our green-grocery and its kindred departments.

Grapes, per lb.	£0	2	0
Peaches, per doz.	0	6	0
Plums, per lb.	0	1	6
Apples, do.	0	1	6
Pears, per doz.	0	6	0
Melons, each	0	1	6
Cucumbers, per doz.	0	3	0
Lettuces, do.	0	6	0
Pease, per quart	0	0	8
French Beans, per lb.	0	1	0
Turnips, per doz	0	6	0

Carrots, per doz.	£0	6	0
Parsnips, do.	0	6	0
Cabbages, do.	0	18	0
Onions, per lb.	0	0	5
Potatoes, per cwt.	1	4	0
Butter, fresh, per lb.	0	3	0
Eggs, per doz.	0	5	0
Fowls, per pair	0	10	0
Ducks, do.	0	12	0
Geese and Turkeys, each	0	14	0

While provisions and other necessaries are at rates so extravagant, the colony, by its scale of wages and remuneration for labour, provides at the same time an ample equivalent. The following list exhibits the present rates of wages for the chief departments of colonial industry:—

MALES.		Rate.
Carpenters	per day	20s.
Blacksmiths	—	18s.
Labourers on Roads	—	10s.
With Rations, &c.		
Married Couples (no family)	yr.	£80
Shepherds	-	£35
Bullock-drivers	week	£3
Farm-labourers	—	30s.
Ploughmen	—	35s.
Gardeners	year	£70

SEAMEN.		Rate.
For the Run Home	the run	£45
For Calcutta	—	£40
For Callao	—	£40
Coasting	month	£9
FEMALES.		
Cooks	year	£40
General Servants	—	£30
Housemaids	—	£25
Laundresses	—	£35
Nursemaids	—	£22

The Exchange on London.—The rapidity with which our exchange on London has advanced to par, is the triumph of the self-rectifying tendencies of commerce. A margin of ten per cent. in exchange with a postal circuit within six months, could not be long public to European capitalists without attracting its own cure, and merchandise and money have alike flowed in upon us. On the occasion of our last address, the exchange on London ranged between the rates of eight and eleven per cent. discount, at which extremes it continued until October following, when a gradual relaxa-

tion commenced. At length in February the rate advanced from five per cent. discount to par for the local banks' drafts on London at thirty days' sight; and in March it took a further rise to one per cent. premium, the banks at the same time purchasing thirty days' drafts at one per cent. discount.

These are no doubt eventual rates, if I may so speak; but whether or not they can as yet be finally sustained, in the face of an import account still so inadequate to that of the exports, remains to be seen. This is a subject of some interest in our commercial economics, because we must now regard our monetary relations as too extensive, and too much affected by the local operations for account of European capitalists, to permit any longer of rates of exchange being determined, as no doubt they were to some extent previously, by the mere dictum of several local banks. The balancing of our large export account by the imports cannot be expected for some time. Our colonists require some habituating interval in order to create or adjust their wants to the great enlargement of their means.

Assay of Gold.—The importance of the institution has only presented itself in a strong light to the colonists. Accustomed for some time to purchase the gold at such low prices that a profit was certain upon any quality of the Australian produce, they had inquired but little for the assay test. The extreme rates of exchange, the low price of gold, and the inability of the local bank to meet by adequate cash advances the enormous gold produce, all tended to concentrate attention rather upon the institution of the Mint, as a means of relief to the severe though temporary pressure. The obvious definition, that with such an institution in operation, the price of gold would rise to the

home rates, less the Mint charges, and the time consumed in the process, had a magical effect upon the producer, who was receiving 60s. for his ounce of gold, which a local mint would return to him in the form of four sovereigns.

At the present price of about 77s. per ounce for Victorian gold, with a par of exchange upon London, the finest qualities may still leave a small margin of profit in the home market; but the less pure samples, and the great bulk of the produce of New South Wales, at this price would be purchased at a loss. Fraudulent deterioration also is understood to be in active operation in these colonies; and parcels of adulterated gold, manufactured in Britain, are known to have been transmitted hither.

Nearly all the gold that is found in the adjacent colony appears to have proved inferior in quality to that of Victoria, to the extent of from 1s. to upwards of 3s. per ounce. The qualities of the Victorian gold are not generally understood to vary so considerably, although reports are prevalent of differences in gold from different localities to the extent of 3s. per ounce. The purest specimens hitherto found are from the Ballarat gold-fields, where the quality approaches 23½ carats, an exceedingly rare purity for gold in the native state. The quality of the Mount Alexander and Bendigo gold is usually 23⅛ carats fine.

The Committee on this subject in the Legislature of New South Wales, sitting at the height of the exchange pressure, dismisses the assay office, but invites the mint. In Victoria, on the other hand, the Committee's report, emanating at a later date, when this pressure was less regarded, is favourable to both institutions, and the evidence is particularly strong towards that of the assay. I need scarcely add that

such an institution is now an imperative necessity, both from the constant apprehension of frauds, and the natural diversities of quality in the produce of the different Australian mines.

Proposed Local Mint.—With a par of exchange on London, and with gold at its present high price in the colonies, of from 77s. to 79s. per ounce, the particular urgency for a local mint has now ceased, and the subject may receive a leisurely consideration.

An erroneous impression appears prevalent that the establishment of a local mint must necessarily occasion the coinage of most or all of our gold produce—a most useless expense to this colony, as is very properly supposed if this result were to follow, since nearly the whole of the gold must on the average of years be exported. Unnecessary coinage might indeed take place occasionally, if the mint operations were to be performed by the government free of any charge,—an arrangement I consider both unlikely and injudicious In the present prospects of the gold-market, it is evident that under even a very moderate mintage rate, the exporting merchant will be in a position to offer to the producer quite as much as he would procure through the medium of the local mint, whose transformation of the gold into coin has not, it must be remembered, increased the value of the metal in the home market, beyond the merely nominal amount charged by the Bank of England, as already noticed.

If our currency consisted of gold only, the market would be maintained in proper supply by an interesting self-acting process. The indications of a scarcity would be manifested by some slight fall in the price of raw gold, in common with other articles of merchandise; and when this fall was suffi-

cient to overbalance the mint charges, an application would be made to that institution for coin, because an obvious profit to the applicant would attend this operation. Our bank-note issues, however, interfere with these nice results; and as our monetary relations now stand, the banks, as they find occasion, will be the applicants for coin, with which a local mint, it may be supposed, will supply them considerably cheaper and much more promptly than by importation from Europe.

For the present, the colony has been amply supplied with coin from the recent large importations. These supplies of specie have not been unnecessary. The wealth suddenly poured in upon us gave an enormous demand for specie on the part of the public, in addition to the requirements of the local banks, in consequence of the large deposits lodged with them, and their extensive note issue. Hereafter, when the relations are better adjusted, much of this coin will prove superfluous, and be available for export.

There is not, therefore, as already observed, any instant occasion for a local mint, the adjustment of exchange and of the price of gold having been already accomplished, and sooner, perhaps, than was generally anticipated. I am disposed, however, in common with many in these colonies, to regard such an institution favourably. I anticipate, indeed, but a comparatively limited demand for coinage, to an extent that may possibly not even defray the expenses connected with the establishment,—so far, at least, as concerns the mere direct receipts under a small mintage rate. But this point does not involve the whole case as regards the public advantage. The expense of importing coin must, on the average of years, cost to the colony the charges on the double transmission of the metal. The saving on this

head, with a local mint, must be considerable to the public. Another instance suggests itself with regard to the large amounts of specie that are precautionally held by our local banks, in consequence of their remote situation from the source of supply, and which, with the resource of a local mint, might be much reduced.

These savings, if not immediately, are at least eventually all to the colonial public; and under the positions and prospects of this colony, the amount likely to be involved in these two instances alone must greatly exceed the whole expenses attendant upon a local mint. This institution might also very properly combine the assaying of gold, now so desirable a branch of public business, and so important to colonial commerce, to be conducted under the authority and responsibility of government. In fine, it seems only reasonable, that Victoria, so remotely situated from head-quarters, and now the centre of extensive commerce, should be in a position to coin, from time to time, from its own immense gold produce, such proportions of money as the requirements of commerce and the wants of society may call for.

The Legislative Council of this colony had agreed during the late session to request of the Home Government the privilege of a branch of the Royal Mint to be established in Melbourne, as the central and now the most important locality, the colony being prepared to meet the expenses of such an institution. Prior to this movement, however, the Legislature of New South Wales had taken a similar step with regard to a mint at Sydney, that being the present capital of these colonies, and the seat of the Governor-General; and the Government of that colony had further transmitted the sum of £10,000, the estimated outfit of a mint establishment upon a moderate scale. A branch mint in

both colonies appears to be quite unnecessary, but in which locality the Home Government will sanction the establishment, is for the present uncertain. This delay may be regarded as favourable to Victoria, in the rapid ascendency she is now acquiring. For the present the Home Government has intimated that the subject is under consideration with the view of sanctioning the operation of the mint "in some part of Australia."

South Australian Gold Act.—I took occasion in the preceding address to direct your attention with some unfavourable consideration to the measure passed shortly before in the adjacent colony, enhancing by legislative enactment the current local value of the gold produce, by making it legal tender at a certain higher rate. That Act has since received the sanction and even the commendations of the Home Government,—a circumstance unlooked for perhaps in all quarters on this side, but at all events so important in the light of an example or precedent, that I am induced to bring the subject again before your notice, and at some length.

Undoubtedly the Act in question, according to testimony in South Australia, operated with benefit in many cases, under a crisis occasioned by the desertion of the labouring classes for Victoria gold-fields; while, at the same time, it gave to the gold only some approximation to the value it was ultimately to possess, and has, in fact, already acquired, in the colonial market. Accordingly, this bridging, as it were, a royal road over the battle-field of exchanges that was going on in the other colonies, this summary adjustment of the troubles of a commercial crisis to those who were particularly affected, were highly commendable, provided the effects of the curative process proceeded no further.

But general principles have been too seriously invaded for the sake of these special considerations. The fact of the depreciation of the South Australian currency below the imperial standard—the result that naturally and promptly followed upon the Act—has been denied by local writers, on the ground that the exchange on London in South Australia was still a discount. This was not, however, by permission of the Act, but in consequence of the still more extreme rates in the adjacent colonies. The question is somewhat complicated, and all points are not met in this exchange comparison. But why argue further on the subject, when it is well known that the British sovereign not only disappeared from general circulation, but was transferred to the columns of the local prices current, where it figured amongst other goods and chattels as worth 2½ to 5 per cent. premium?

What have been the effects of this Act? After admitting its partial benefits, let us take as examples a few of its more prominent evils. The local banks were enabled to refuse the promised payment of their notes in sterling money, and they did so, or rather were compelled in self-defence to do so under the circumstances brought about by the Act. Credits from abroad were refused in the imperial currency in which they were contracted, unless at a certain charge over and above the original bargain. Bills and debts daily falling due were paid in money that was no longer an equivalent to what was parted with at the outset of the contract. Prior to the act, or in its earlier stages, large quantities of property were disposed of by unwitting proprietors, for sums of money that shortly afterwards, by the great rise in prices, had no longer the same value in exchange. This change in prices was indeed due in great measure to the natural

effects of the gold discoveries; but in so far as it was due to legislation, it was a breach of principle, and an injustice to the many, however marked the advantage to any smaller number. And finally the British coinage was quoted in the market as merchandise, of which one hundred pieces, we were told, were worth £105 of South Australian money.

In giving their decision, our Home Government could scarcely have had these facts before them; or, if otherwise, we may only speculate on the amount of leisurely consideration that is likely to be spared at home for each and all of the affairs of our forty-five different colonies, and on the *rationale* of the familiar system by which commendations and reproofs are showered alternately upon the perplexed colonists.

The Gold Fields.—Our previous address, delivered twelve months ago, left the busy gold-diggers, to the number of about 50,000 persons, located chiefly around Mount Alexander. A small number still adhered to Ballarat, the first gold field of any importance that had been worked in the colony; but the great proportion of the mining population lined the hollows of the Forest and Fryer's creeks, at a distance of several miles to the southward and westward of the far-famed Mount. The dryness of the season, usual at that time of the year, and the consequent scarcity of water for washing purposes, had greatly restricted the yield of gold as compared with the numbers engaged. In many instances the auriferous earth was conveyed in carts to distances of several miles for water.

The ambitious, the discontented, and the unlucky were alike on the outlook for better things. The belief gradually impressed upon our colonists, that the entire country in that locality was one vast gold-field, stimulated further research.

The similarity in the general landscape features favoured this impression. There was ever recurring the same hard dry surface, favourably impressing the wayfarer by the excellence of the natural road. There was the same light reddish soil, with a grassy undulating country, and an open forest having a conspicuous predominance of red gum-trees. But, above all, there was the hope-inspiring quartz gravel, found either at or near the surface, or in the immediate vicinity of spots that exhibited "denudation" symptoms, indicative of the gravel having once been there, and having possibly left behind it the gold with which it has been so generally found charged.

A vigorous prospecting was carried on, chiefly in the direction of the northern interior. The romance of gold-digging seems most naturally to consort with the experience of difficulties and privations, and with remote and unknown localities. The nearer and more convenient diggings seem never to sustain the attractions of the more remote. A gold mine in the vicinity of a town, or in the midst of a farm, inspires no faith and imparts no enthusiasm. Nevertheless, the greater part of this city rests upon a soil identical in its main features with the auriferous fields of Ballarat and Mount Alexander. There is the same general aspect, the reddish dry soil and the gravel, together with that celebrated subjacent "pipeclay," from which, in the earlier days of Ballarat, the astonished diggers were reported to be picking out with a penknife the "vein" of small nuggets that had been laid bare by the pick and shovel. When gold-digging has subsided into a routine of daily labour, the harvests that possibly exist nearer home may have a better consideration.

In April, the valley of the Bendigo Creek, about twenty-five miles to the north of Mount Alexander, began to acquire

celebrity; and in the following month thousands of persons who had hurried forward from various parts, appeared at the new diggings. The autumn rains had now begun to afford some supply of water, and the general success at Bendigo soon very sensibly affected the quantities of gold brought into town from thence and from Mount Alexander by the weekly armed escorts. In May this quantity amounted to 76,000 ounces; in June to 115,000, but in July it rose to 320,000 ounces.

For several months the Bendigo gold-fields maintained an undisputed position of primary importance, and are probably, even now, the most productive, although less in vogue than formerly. The reputation of Bendigo was at its height during the month of June. The road from Mount Alexander at this time was represented as one continuous line of vehicles and passengers. The masses of population, estimated, probably with some exaggeration, at 40,000 souls, spread themselves into the adjacent gullies and creek beds, to each of which they applied some significant or fanciful appellation.

The great distance from markets, and the bad condition, generally, of the roads during winter, raised the prices of all provisions and other necessaries at Bendigo to enormous rates. The carriage of these articles rose to upwards of £100 per ton, or £1 per ton per mile; and it was estimated that the cost of the mere carriage of supplies for Bendigo and Mount Alexander, for the six months of the winter season, would not fall short of that of the construction of a railway for the entire line. The following is a comparative statement of some of these prices, and of the concurrent rates for the same articles in the Melbourne market. With

a return of summer, and a good condition of the roads, supplies have since been more abundant, and prices much reduced; but approaching winter may probably renew these high rates.

	Bendigo.			Melbourne.		
Oats per bushel	£1	13	0	£0	7	6
Flour, bag of 200 lbs.	16	0	0	2	10	0
Bran per bushel	0	16	0	0	2	3
Sugar per lb.	0	1	4	0	0	3
Tea do.	0	4	6	0	1	6
Butter do.	0	5	0	0	2	0
Cheese do.	0	4	6	0	2	0
Tobacco do.	0	12	0	0	6	0

But these fitful masses moved with every breeze. The rumours from Mount Korong further north, and from Daisy Hill to the westward, detached some portion of the crowd. The reputation of Forest Creek gradually revived by the opening of some richer branch diggings. More recently, the gold field around the township of Wangaratta, and in the vicinity of the River Ovens, in the direction of the main road to Sydney, has excited general attention. A large body of diggers is already at work in this locality, and the produce is so considerable as to have induced the establishment of an escort party from Sydney, for the conveyance of the gold direct to that market. Within the last two months, however, the reputation of Ballarat has suddenly revived, and almost eclipsed that of the other localities by the marked increase of its produce, and by the discovery of several masses of pure gold of unprecedented dimensions.

Our mines generally have been remarkable for the production of these solid masses, with exception, however, of the Ovens gold fields, whose produce contrasts strikingly, in the smallness of its grain, with that of the other mining

localities. These masses, the *pepitas* of the Spaniards, or the *nugget*, according to our style, are rarely found in other countries of those large dimensions that are now quite familiar to the miners of this colony. The gold mines of the Ural mountains, as I am informed, have yielded some years ago a mass of this description, of 70 lbs. weight, which is now in possession of the Emperor of Russia; but, prior to this discovery, the largest pepitas did not exceed in weight 35½ lbs. troy. The celebrated "hundredweight of gold," or more accurately, 106 lbs. weight, discovered in 1851, upon the pastoral station of Dr Kerr, in New South Wales, was not properly of this description, but divided into pieces that pervaded a small mass of quartz.

The first of these considerable masses of Victorian Gold, known as "the Dascombe Nugget," was found at Bendigo. It weighed 27 lbs. 8 oz., had a bright and clear surface, and was dug up from a gravelly soil at a depth not exceeding a foot. This attractive mass, at that time the largest that had been found in any British possession, was exhibited to our gracious Queen by its ambitious proprietor. Subsequently, another of twenty-eight pounds weight, was discovered in the same locality, and under very similar conditions. This second mass, which was purchased by the local government for presentation to Her Majesty, contained, perhaps, less weight of actual gold than its predecessor, from the circumstance of the surface having been considerably incrusted with iron. After some interval, a third mass, much larger than the others, was discovered, weighing no less than forty-five pounds troy. These three different specimens were all stated to have been got from the same hollow, two of them having been found close to each other, and all of

them extracted from the superficial gravel, or the sub-soil immediately beneath. Nuggets of various lesser dimensions were found abundantly throughout most of the gold-fields.

Several masses recently discovered at Ballarat, however, have attracted still greater notice, both from their larger dimensions, and from the different circumstances under which they have been found. They have been all excavated from one locality, a part of the diggings known as the Canadian Gully, and from a bed described as consisting of compact broken quartz, at the considerable depth of from fifty to sixty feet from the surface. The deep indentures of the nuggets were filled with this quartz. The largest of these masses weighed, in gross, upwards of 134 lbs., of which it was estimated that at least 126 lbs. consisted of solid gold.

The art and mystery of digging and washing gold has not as yet made any remarkable progress amongst us. The digger has indeed gradually seen his own way to a few empiric steps. The array of small cradles that thickly lined the Ballarat Creek eighteen months ago, with their rustic mechanism and laborious noise, have been in some measure abandoned by the "old hands," whose appliances of small artificial waterfalls, more capacious apparatus, and more easy and effective movements, enable them to accomplish, with less manual fatigue, a greater amount of business. Several gold-companies, established in London, with reference to this colony, have, for the present, failed in their main object, from the difficulty, or rather impossibility, of retaining their hands upon the gold-fields. This system of working our mines may yet, however, be found to answer, under some special arrangement with the men, and some different official regulations.

Gold-digging in Victoria, therefore, has hitherto been entirely an art in the sense the furthest removed from the guidance of science. The Ballarat diggers first skirmished with the upper soil as long as the inspiring gravel greeted their view. Discoveries of gold in a soft clay shale beneath stimulated them to attempt the deeper diggings, and holes were sunk as far as thirty feet, in a vain attempt to sound the mysterious depths of the pipeclay, and ascertain what treasures might be found beneath.

Deep diggings, like remote gold-mines, are generally the most attractive. At Mount Alexander and Bendigo, still greater depths were attained, and a system of tunnelling, after a rude and rather dangerous fashion, was carried on when "a vein" was met with. These so called veins were a kind of irregular chain, or succession of small nuggets, or of material comparatively rich in gold. Their constancy and the direction of their course were very problematical. Nevertheless "striking a vein" soon became a term synonymous with the acquisition of some fragment of a fortune.

Several rising grounds on the Bendigo diggings acquired the title of the White Hills, from the circumstance of an immense ejection of soft fine shale, of a dazzling satiny hue, which the miners had cast up from a great depth beneath in their hunt for gold. The metal was here discovered under singular and unexampled relations. The digger, passing through surface gravel for several feet, through clay mixed with gravel, through white quartz boulders imbedded in their own debris, reached a stratum not exceeding two inches in thickness, beneath which is once more the pervading pipeclay, whose glossy whiteness in this locality had given the appellation to the hills on whose surface it had been thrown up.

This very attenuated bed, thus resting on the great pipeclay formation, occurs at depths varying between twenty-five and sixty feet. It consists of a quartz grit, distinctly defined from superincumbent quartz in a different form. The lower part of this bed, for a half or two thirds of an inch in thickness, was tinged of a reddish brown, apparently from oxide of iron, the hue being deepest at the base of the bed where it joined the subjacent clay shale. This grit appeared throughout to be charged with gold, particularly in its discoloured and lower portion, where the bright specks could be seen in abundance with the naked eye. These claims proved very remunerative, notwithstanding heavy preliminary diggings. The contents of a bucket from the gritty bed would commonly yield two or three ounces of gold. These hills were soon occupied as claims, by diggers who jealously watched and defended their treasure, and the grounds were completely undermined in the search for so rich a harvest. Latterly, the deep digging has been pursued still more boldly, the shafts having been sunk, in some instances, upwards of one hundred feet. The unprecedented masses lately discovered at Ballarat have rewarded these adventurous explorations.

Social Features.—We have now at considerable length occupied our attention with subjects of a congratulatory character,—with present progress and prosperity unexampled, and with a future even still more brilliant. This, however, to use a familiar phrase, is an aspect of "things in the gross." We must all admit that the colony has suffered as well as gained by her recent developments. We are familiar with striking changes in our social condition, that have not by any means improved our social aspect, or enhanced the enjoyments of life. The increasing tide of

business has brought absorbing cares that have well nigh put an end to social intercourse. The accustomed relations and gradations of society have been too suddenly upset. The increase and the misuse of means have kept pace together. The large amounts of wealth carried about upon the person, particularly in the case of the labouring classes, have given a stimulus to robbery and outrage throughout the country.

Nearly all the more atrocious crimes, as far as can be ascertained, are committed by the convict population flowing in upon us from Van Diemen's Land. These criminal elements of our society have too often developed themselves in deeds of frightful daring and merciless atrocity. This is a subject on which I had occasion to advert with painful earnestness in the course of the last address, but to which I can now recur with some congratulation. The paragraph in the Queen's speech at the opening of the last Parliament, so recently before us, may perhaps be considered to have sealed the fate of the transportation question, as far at least as regards these Australian settlements. One great object must now be to secure the prompt accomplishment of this contemplated change, for the hundreds, and even thousands of criminals who are still to this hour successively ejected upon the Tasmanian shore, are only so many additional terrors and misfortunes in the future of this colony. In the meantime, a searching and extreme measure, the Convicts Prevention Bill, has been passed by the Local Legislature, and sanctioned by the Executive Government, in order to guard our society, as far as practicable, from this influx of crime.

The vocation of gold-digging, under its present aspects,

has many social disadvantages to weigh against its dazzling results in other respects. The separation from home and domestic ties, the exposed and laborious mode of life, the semi-gambling character of the results, are all circumstances of a character adverse to social progress and welfare. These mining employments have also been found in many instances highly injurious to health. Many deaths have occurred,—"the unrecorded dead," in their last moments far removed from friends and home.

Attractive at first to the uninitiated, gold-digging soon loses, in its hard realities, the gilding with which a romantic imagination might have invested it. There is at present a much smaller number of persons engaged at the various gold-fields than is popularly supposed. In the minute I have alluded to, the number for 31st December last is estimated at upwards of 70,000. I would not estimate this number to be greater now, and it includes females, children, dealers, officials, and visiters, whose united body may amount to above one-fifth of the number. The estimate of the Local Commissioners is even considerably less. A different estimate has popularly obtained, from observation of the regularity with which the great proportion of the newly-arrived immigrants proceed at once to the gold-fields. To this step they are usually impelled, in the first place, by hope and curiosity; but also by the want of town accommodations, the expenses of living in Melbourne, and the difficulty of procuring promptly, on the part of such competing crowds of new arrivals, any other mode of employment. There is always, however, a counter stream of returning diggers, nearly as considerable as that which is incessantly marching forwards.

The circumstances of this colony, with reference to the great and increasing tide of our fellow-men that is now flowing in upon us, have engaged the attention both of the Government and the public. On the part of such competing numbers, the great difficulty has latterly been to find immediate and suitable employment. Among those newly-arrived colonists, therefore, scenes of distress and difficulty are constantly being encountered in a colony that is full of wealth, and scarce of labourers in every industrial department. These scenes are often still more sad, from the despondencies affecting the friendless and disappointed. It is impossible to adjust at once to their several spheres and vocations these large and incessant additions to our still limited society. The overcrowded and unhealthy state of the town have occasioned sickness and death to an unusual extent amongst all classes of colonists. By the united pecuniary aid of the Government and the public, barracks have been erected for the use of such immigrants as may not have found any other home, with the view of affording shelter at a small charge, until they have otherwise provided themselves.

I have thus endeavoured to convey some correct picture of the commercial aspects and social condition of our colony. In the midst of mines of wealth and a race of progress, our society is, for the present, beset with difficulties and discomforts. Time, however, will rub off many of the asperities which the sudden changes in our condition have introduced. Prosperity, the acquisition of wealth or competency, for which a colony owes its chief attractions to the immigrant, must be considered a counterbalance to many disadvantages. And with this ample wealth, the race too is interesting.

The effect upon the commerce of the world, occasioned by the present large supplies of gold from this colony and California, is of itself an exciting subject; but incredibly more so are all the multifarious movements that have begun to take place in consequence of these gold discoveries—the outpouring of the teeming north into the solitudes of the south, and the irresistible spread of enterprise and freedom, civilisation and religion, to the remotest parts of the world.

Postscript, London, 2d August 1853.—The last mails from Victoria bring the usual comparative Statement of the first quarter of the present and past year, which, as a remarkable exponent of the continued progress of the colony, I give here in several of its totals. Notwithstanding a great increase of revenue for the first quarter of 1852, over that of the like period of the year preceding, the returns for the present year are considerably more than double those of 1852. The following is the abstract:—

Public Revenue of Victoria, for the Quarters ended 31st March 1852 and 1853.

	1852.	1853.
Gold Revenue	£53,088	£20[illegible],847
Customs	60,025	129,8[illegible]
Post Office	2,241	4,359
Total of General Revenue	128,360	361,689
Proceeds of Land Sales	95,249	157,865
Total of Territorial Revenue	103,740	163,306
General Total	232,108	524,395

MINUTE

On the Progress and Commerce of Victoria, drawn up for the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce, by William Westgarth, and adopted by that body, 9th February 1853.

(From the Melbourne Argus of 10th Feb.)

A MEETING of the Committee of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce was held yesterday, at which the following paper was read by William Westgarth, Esq., M.L.C., late Chairman of the Chamber:—

Prior to the discovery of the gold-fields in the year 1851, Victoria, at that time a district of the colony of New South Wales, had been already characterized by a degree of progress unexampled in the history of British colonization. The natural adaptation of the country for the production of a valuable article of export afforded to the colonists rare facilities of progress even from the earliest stages. Taking the year 1844, a step just midway in the entire interval of Victoria's history, we find the province to be then exporting an annual colonial produce equal in value to a quarter of a million sterling. In the year 1850, fifteen years from the time of the first settlement, this annual export had increased to upwards of one million.

This produce, which, at both of these periods, consisted almost entirely of fine wool, was raised from the natural pasturage of the colony at a comparatively small expense of time and labour. A population averaging, for 1850, 70,000 colo-

nists, thus commanded, from such prompt and facile sources, a proportion of external commerce equally rare and beneficial. The young community, thus enabled to help itself liberally to the choice productions of other countries most suited to its wants, occupied a position in regard to business and the general amenities of life that has been usually attainable, according to past colonizing experience, only after a long interval of comparative poverty and privation.

But this rate of progress, satisfactory as it appeared to us at the time, has been far outstripped since the discovery of the gold-fields. Within twelve months, the population of the colony has been more than doubled. The other items of material progress exhibit even more surprising results. The public revenues, for example, within the same interval of time, have been increased more than fourfold; and the amount of the export of colonial produce has advanced from £1,400,000 in 1851, to nearly seven and a half millions for the year 1852. A calculation, to which we shall presently advert, will exhibit even this latter amount, namely, the export as officially recorded for 1852, as being far below the actual truth, and will give already to our young colony the position of exporting annually the largest amount of produce of any of the British dependencies.

In order to illustrate fully this interesting progress, let us first take a view, year by year, of the earlier colonizing results, as indicated by the official records of the import and export trade. The following Table comprises these Returns from the latter part of 1836, at which time the Customs establishment was first formed in the district, to the year 1850 inclusive, being the year preceding that in which the gold discoveries took place.

It may be remarked, with regard to these returns, that in consequence of the Port of Sydney, between which and the Port Phillip District there always existed a very considerable business, being within one and the same colony, the proportion of the imports and exports of the province, received or sent *via* that quarter, are not included in the returns. This remark applies more particularly to the earlier years, in which, therefore, the trade of the young settlement appears somewhat shorn of its due proportions.

TABLE 1.

Imports, Exports, and Population of Victoria, from the commencement to 1850:—

Year.	Imports.	Exports.	Total of External Trade.	Population Average of Year.
1836 . . .		From 11th Oct. 1836		1,200
1837 . . .		14,000		3,000
1838 . . .	71,000	21,000	92,000	5,000
1839	205,000	78,000	283,000	7,000
1840	392,000	155,000	517,000	10,000
1841	335,000	139,000	474,000	14 000
1842 . . .	264,000	204,000	468,000	19 000
1843	183,000	278,000	461,000	22,000
1844	151,000	257,000	408,000	24,000
1845	248,000	464,000	712,000	28,000
1846	316,000	425,000	741,000	34,000
1847	438 000	669,000	1,107,000	42,000
1848	374,000	675,000	1,049,000	50,000
1849	480,000	755,000	1,235,000	60,000
1850	745,000	1,042,000	1,787,000	70,000

Let us now compare the wonderful effects arising from the discovery of the gold-fields. Extending the comparative illustration over the three past years, we have first, the position of the colony in 1850, the year prior to the gold-discoveries; next, the commencing indications of rapid progress

in 1851, the year in which these discoveries were effected; and lastly, the results for 1852, during the whole of which year the mines were worked by considerable numbers of persons. The following tabular statements have been selected from public documents and accounts as the most suitable illustration of the general progress.

COLONY OF VICTORIA.

Comparative Summary, 1850—1852.

	1850.	1851.	1852.
Revenue, Ordinary . . .	£124,469	£180,004*	£845,834†
Revenue, Crown . . .	136,852	199,820	730,967
Total Revenue	261,321	379,824	1,576,801
Imports	744,925	1,056,437	4,043,896
Exports	1,041,796	1,423,909	7,451,549
Shipping inwards { No.	555	669	1657
Shipping inwards { tonnage	108,030	126,411	408,216
Bank deposits, 4th quarter	‡	822,254	4,334,241§
Circulation, ditto .		180,058	1,327,311
Coin and Gold . . .		310,724	3,034,538‖
Number of Banks . . .	2	3	5
Valuation of Melbourne (annual value)	154,063	174,723	638,000
Population, 31st December	75,000	95,000	200,000

* Includes £24,404 of Gold Revenue.

† Includes £438,845 of Gold Revenue.

‡ There are no Bank returns for Victoria as distinct from New South Wales, prior to 1st July 1851.

§ Of this amount, nearly £700,000 is deposited by the Government. The banks give no interest on any deposits.

‖ Of this amount £1,129,420 consists of gold-dust estimated either at cost or valuation.

We shall now present several of these and other principal departments in their various details, selecting such items as may prove important to the illustration.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

The following Tables comprise several principal heads of account. The advance for 1852, in both receipts and expenditure, is quite enormous. It must be borne in mind, with regard to expenditure, for example, on public works and other colonial requirements, that there were not only great necessities on the part of the colony, but that money, under the reigning state of things, as compared with past years, was very inefficient in providing for these wants.

The Customs receipts, on comparing two of the following Tables, exhibit a difference in amount, the first being the receipts at the Treasury, and the other those at the Customs. The Treasury returns, being for a period of one month behind those of the Customs, exhibit the smaller amount. In the rapid progression of last year, this circumstance has made a difference of nearly £23,000.

TABLE 2.

Comparative View of the amount of some of the principal Items of Public Revenue, for the years 1850, 1851, 1852.

	1850.	1851.	1852.
Customs	77,985	106,092	319,032
Postage	6,629	8,676	12,454
Auction Duty	2,252	1,642	6,806
Fines, &c. (chiefly for offences)	676	947	16,067
Land Sales	123,392	174,275	703,358

TABLE 3.

Comparative View of some of the principal Items of the Estimates of Public Expenditure, as voted by the Colonial Legislature, in the years 1850, 1851, 1852, for the service of the following years respectively, namely for—

	1851.	1852.	1853.
Post Office Department . .	£11.165	£17,362	£64,622
Ports and Harbours . . .	4,198	10,737	42,580
Public Works	32,697	51,153	719,924
Police	23,942	34,953	317,579
Gaols	6,604	10,761	94,549
Administration of Justice .	7,094	10,535	43,230
Education	5.906	10,248	79,000

TABLE 4.

Comparative amount of Revenue, as received by the Customs, for the years 1851 and 1852, distinguishing the amounts collected at each of the Ports of the Colony:—

Port.	1851.	1852.
Melbourne	£79,300	£274,800
Geelong	20,589	49,786
Portland	5,800	8,512
Port Fairy	3,883	7,181
Port Albert	1,045	1,546
Total	110,617	341,825
Increase . . .	..	231,208

The New Tariff.—Before proceeding to the subject of Import and Export commerce, some notice is due to the newly imposed tariff of this Colony, which came into operation on 13th August last. A spirit of tariff reform seems to have agitated all these colonies towards the end of 1851, consequent no doubt to some extent upon the constitutional changes introduced in that year for all the Australias by the Imperial Government.

The tariffs in this and the adjacent colonies, which preceded those now in operation, were all founded more or less upon the old "protective" model. British and Colonial spirits were admitted at one rate of duty, and foreign spirits at another. The produce of the United Kingdom generally was exempted from duty, while foreign goods paid an *ad valorem* rate of 10 or 15 per cent., a duty which, by the reading of the Act, was applicable in each colony to the produce of the others. Intercolonial commerce was thus restricted, and small duties were imposed on a large number of articles, producing in most cases but little revenue, as compared with the expense of collection, the restrictions to commerce, and the inconvenience to the public.

The Victoria Tariff abolishes both the differential system and the whole of the smaller duties, freeing the dutiable list from all excepting five different articles of large and general consumption. These articles are spirits, wines, tobacco, tea, and coffee, and in each instance the duty is a fixed rate, as preferable to the *ad valorem* system.

The New South Wales Tariff has reduced and simplified the list of dutiable articles, but still retains in favour of British, Colonial, and Home made spirits, the differential system of duty. The same remarks apply to Van Diemen's Land, save that the differential rate is hostile only to brandy. In South Australia the differential system has been abandoned, but the tariff still comprises a formidable array of duties, small and great, upon every article of customary import, levied by a mixed system of *ad valorem* and fixed rates.

Some steps have also been taken in the different colonies, towards the abolition of various port dues. In Victoria,

the only charges now affecting shipping are a moderate rate of pilotage, the Act abolishing the various dues and wharfage rates having come into operation on 1st February, instant. In New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, the wharfage and light dues are additionally in operation. South Australia, on the other hand, has restored these various dues, after they had been for some period abolished.

The following tabular view illustrates the different colonial tariffs:—

TABLE 5.

Table illustrative of the Tariff Rates adopted by the different Australian Colonies by the Legislative enactments passed in the year 1852:

Articles.		Per	Victoria	New S. Wales.	V. D. Land.	S. Australia.
Spirits	Cordials, and sweetened	gallon			12s.	
	Brandy	proof gallon		6s.		
	Geneva		7s.			6s.
	B. P. Rum, and British Spirits			4s.	9s.	
	Colonial Distillation			3s. 6d.		
Wines	in wood	gallon	1s.	1s.	1s.	2s.
	in bottle					
Tobacco	Cigars and Snuff			2s.	2s.	2s. 6d.
	Other kinds manufactured	lb.	2s.	1s. 6d ‡		1s.
	Unmanufactured			1s.	2s.†	
Tea			3d.	1½d.	3d.	2d.
Coffee		cwt.	10s.	per lb. ¾d.*	per lb. 1½d.	per cwt. 6s.
Sugar	Molasses			1s. 8d.		
	Raw			2s. 6d.	3s.	2s.
	Refined			3s. 4d.	6s.	4s.
Beer	in wood	gallon		1d.	2d.	
	in bottle			2d	6d.	4d.
Dried fruits		lb.		½d.	1d.	per cwt. 4s.
Hops					2d.	2d.

All other goods are free, except in South Australia, where duties, generally of small amount, varying from 5 per cent. ad valorem upwards, are imposed upon all the usual articles of import trade.

* Includes also cocoa and chocolate. † Snuff is exempted. ‡ To continue until 31st December, and thenceforward to be 1s. per lb.

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS.

TABLE 6.

Comparative Return of the Value of Imports into and Exports from the Colony of Victoria, for the years 1850, 1851 and 1852.

IMPORTS.

Year.	Articles the Produce & Manufacture of			Total.
	The United Kingdom.	Other British Dominions.	Foreign States.	
1852	2,013,614	1,028,297	1,027,831	4,069,742
1851	690,661	190,757	174,919	1,056,437
1850	517,035	102,138	125,752	744,925

EXPORTS.

Year.	Articles the Produce or Manufacture of				Total.
	Victoria.	United Kingdom.	Other British Dominions.	Foreign States.	
1852	7,329,930	47,827	18,902	54,890	7,451,549
1851	1,382,267	29,533	2,107	9,002	1,422,909
1850	1,022,064	12,945	195	6,592	1,041,796

TABLE 7.

Comparative View of the principal Articles of Import (quantity or value) into the Colony of Victoria for the years 1850, 1851, and 1852.

Description.	1852.	1851.	1850.
Apparel and Slops........ value	£149,566	£66,063	£42,086
Beer and Ale...............galls.	822,889	641,850	381,150
Cottons........... ....value	161,492	72,448	50,924
Flour and Bread...........cwts.	461,009	66,300	14,360
Haberdashery........... ...value	220,123	73,943	63,350
Hardware & Ironmongery „	137,805	71,356	43,908
Iron and Steel...............tons	1,492	1,293	2,310
Spirits.......................galls.	811,424	221,215	296,277
Sugar.............. ....tons	7,841	3,419	3,101
Tea............. ....lbs.	2,157,792	864,509	722,824
Tobacco, Cigars, & Snuff... „	1,315,128	450,240	288,100
Timber ....value	134,702	35,571	35,889
Wine...........................galls.	408,376	62,070	78,720
Total Imports...value	4,069,742	1,056,437	744,925

TABLE 8.

Comparative View of the principal Articles of Export, in quantity of produce, from the Colony of Victoria, for the Years 1850, 1851, and 1852:—

Article.	1852.	1851.	1850.
Beef..................tons	397	1,391	975
Cattle...............num.	4,695	6,281	5,287
Sheep.... ....num.	49,621	69,224	57,422
Tallow...............tons	1,991	4,223	4,489
Wool...................lb.	20,247,453	16,345,468	18,091,207
Gold..... ....oz.	1,974,975	145,146	nil.

Referring to the produce of wool for last year, as indicated by the preceding Table, it will be seen that the quantity for 1852 has considerably exceeded that of any previous year. I would, however, recall the circumstances alluded to in my address to the Chamber in April last, that the lateness of the shipping season, consequent upon the derangement of the labour-market, had thrown a proportion of the wool usually shipped prior to 31st December into the following year. The large quantity for 1852 is therefore partly the correction of this incident. It is due, also, in some measure to the shipment of a considerable portion of wool in the grease.

The rapid increase in the production of wool which characterized this colony up to the year 1851, has now ceased; but it is satisfactory to ascertain that as yet the export has not begun to decrease; some allowance for the extra weight of shipments of unwashed wool, is fully set off by a consideration for the increased lateness of the present season. The future prospect, however, as regards our wool production, is less satisfactory, from the immense consumption,

both present and prospective, of sheep as food, and the fact already evident, that the live stock of the colony must ere long prove quite inadequate to meet the wants of the daily increasing population.

GOLD.

Table 9.

Export of Gold from Victoria, the produce of that Colony, according to Official Returns, to the end of the year 1852, distinguishing the Port of Shipment and the Place to which Shipped.

Port of Shipment.	Ounce.	Port to which Shipped	Ounce.
Melbourne . .	1,996,660	London . . .	1,739,504
Geelong . . .	118,732	Liverpool . . .	20,120
Portland . . .	3,039	Calcutta . . .	22,000
Port Fairy . .	1,690	Singapore . . .	5,396
		Sydney	313,912
		Hobart Town . .	1,965
		Adelaide . . .	13,813
		Hamburg . . .	3,411
Total . .	2,120,121	Total . .	2,120,121

In addition to the results shown by the following Table, the Overland Escort, established by the South Australian Government, conveyed direct from the gold-fields to Adelaide 228,532 ounces. The first of these Overland Escorts, after an arduous journey of 400 miles, through the Australian wilderness, entered Adelaide on the 19th March last, amidst the acclamations of the people, conveying 5190 ounces of gold.

Table 10.

GOLD RECEIVED BY ESCORT, AND GOLD EXPORTED.

Monthly Return of the quantity of Gold brought by the various armed Escorts from the Gold Fields into Melbourne and Geelong, and of the quantity exported from the different ports of the Colony, from the discovery of gold in Victoria, to the 31st Dec., 1852; quantity in ounces.

Month.	Received by Escort.			Total by Escort.	Exported.
	Ballarat.	M. Alexan. & Bendigo.	River Ovens.		
1851.					
August ...					18
September	121			121	
October ..	4390	228		4618	1560
November	9448	17,816		27,264	3441
December	6391	65,759		72,150	140,128
1852.					
January ..	246	53,348		53,594	160,477
February .	118	56,024		56,142	152,560
March	644	61,382		62,026	107,406
April	484	67,557		68,041	92,512
May	814	76,433		77,247	94,975
June	1446	114,563		116,009	152,242
July	581	319,637		320,218	179,412
August	2230	311,965		314,195	172,091
September	2165	305,117		307,282	161,189
October ...	6314	271,260		277,574	248,397
November	14,694	260,641	5,783	281,118	322,550
December	13,926	126,635	9,020	149,581	131,163
	64,012	2,108,365	14,803	2,187,180	
Per Victoria Escort, from Kyneton, &c....				3692	
				2,190,872	2,120,121

The above Table is drawn up from detailed returns, with which I have been favoured, from the Colonial Treasury and the Victoria Gold Escort Company. The Government having but one escort establishment in the interior for Mount

Alexander and Bendigo, which are both on one line of road, the quantities from each have not been distinguished. This distinction, however, is given by the Victoria Escort Company, which commenced its operations from Mount Alexander (Forest Creek) in June, extending its course to Bendigo in the following month. The total quantity to the end of the year was 629,120 ounces from Bendigo, and 264,417 from Mount Alexander. Taking similar proportions with regard to the Government Escort returns, we may assume that Bendigo supplied somewhat more than two-thirds.

Bendigo has since comparatively fallen back in reputation and productiveness. Ballarat, on the other hand, the first gold-field of any noticeable importance that was discovered in Victoria, has, after a chequered lot, become of late exceedingly productive. Within the last few days, three enormous masses have been dug out of this field, weighing conjointly, according to report, nearly three hundred pounds troy of solid gold. They were all discovered in one locality at a depth of from 50 to 64 feet. The Ballarat gold is 23½ carats fine, being in a nearly pure state, and the purest hitherto met with in Australia.

ESTIMATE OF THE GOLD PRODUCE.

The data afforded by the two preceding Tables are generally understood to convey an inadequate idea of the actual produce of the gold mines of this colony. Large quantities of the precious metal leave the colonial ports daily without any official record. This circumstance is strongly exemplified by the case of Van Diemen's Land, which, receiving

all its supply of gold from this colony, amounting, by an estimate below, to 246,645 ounces, yet appears on the Victoria Export Record to have been supplied to the extent of only 1965 ounces.

TABLE 11.

Estimate of Produce of the Gold-fields of Victoria, to the end of the Year 1852.

QUANTITIES EXPRESSED IN OUNCES.

		Ascertained.	Estimated.
Official Report, per Customs Returns 1851	145,146		
Official Report, per Customs Returns 1852	1,974,975		
		2,120,121	
Exported direct overland to South Australia		*228,533	
On hand, Dec. 31. in the Banks: Melbourne	530,000		
On hand, Dec. 31. in the Banks: Geelong	135,000		
		515,000	[illegible]0,000
Do. Victoria Escort Company		58,982	
Do. Treasury: Government Gold	11,650		
Do. Treasury: Private Gold	50,611		
		62,261	
Do. Gold-fields: Government Offices	33,885	33,885	
Do. Gold-fields: Elsewhere	100,000	...	100,000
On the Road: Government Escorts	19,591		
On the Road: Private Escorts	20,047	39,638	
On the Road: Other Hands	10,000		
		...	10,000
In Melbourne, Geelong, and elsewhere		..	‡100,000
Exported unrecorded to England, the East, &c.		..	50,000

* This is from South Australian Returns. Victoria records give the quantity as much less, owing to several escorts having gone, ere the record was commenced.

† This quantity is for Gold of private parties, held at date by the Union Bank, and not included in certain Returns made by the Company.

‡ According to returns made by the Government, twenty-one merchants and dealers of Melbourne held on their premises on 31st December, 27,493 ounces gold. There were many more holders.

				Ascertained.	Estimated.
The following Estimates, taken from various data, give the probable quantities of Gold that have been exported without record from Victoria to adjoining Colonies :—					
To NEW SOUTH WALES :—					
Official Export from that Colony .	1851 .	134,420			
	1852 .	856,188			
		990,608			
Deduct Victoria Official Export		313,912			
Do. produce of N. S. Wales, received by Escort and Mails	1851 .	*77,923			
	1852 .	233,869			
		645,695		†364,913	
Amount brought in by private hand is placed against unrecorded export of Gold from Sydney.					
On hand in Sydney, at 31st Dec. . .					‡465,000
To VAN DIEMEN'S LAND :—					
Ascertained Export, Hobart Town§ .	1851 .	7,636			
	1852 .	134,863			
		142,499			
Do. Launceston . .	1852 .	37,146			
		179,645			
Deduct Victoria Official Report		1,965			
				177,680	
Unascertained Export from—					
Hobart Town		10,000			
Launceston		1,000			
On hand at—					
Hobart Town		40,000			
Launceston		16,000		...	67,000

* This amount is calculated upon the Revenue derived from its transport, as compared with 1852, for which returns are before me.

† This should have been 344,913,—*vid.* Pref. p. 10, line 8.

‡ This quantity is taken at about two-thirds of that at Melbourne at same date.

§ The Returns for Van Diemen's Land were privately furnished to the Customs after departure of the different vessels.

			Ascertained.	Estimated.
To South Australia:—				
Received into Assay Office to 31st Dec. . . .		406,693		
Official Export to date	263,564			
Less assay. Proportion	100,000			
	——	163,564		
		570,257		
Deduct Victoria Official Export .	13,813			
Do. Overland Escort Return . . .	228,533			
	——	242,346	327,913	
Unassayed gold on hand			...	20,000
Unrecorded Export (under 5000 oz.) placed against gold produced in South Australia				
Totals .			3,928,926	962,000

Table 12.

General Summary of the produce of the Gold-fields of Victoria from commencement in August 1851 to 31st December 1852.

	Ascertained	Estimated.	Total.
Exported, per official return .	2,120,121	...	..
Ditto, overland to Adelaide .	228,533	. .	2,348,654
Unrecorded export; viz., to—			
New South Wales . . .	364,913	465,000	829,913
Van Diemen's Land . .	177,680	67,000	244,680
South Australia	327,913	20,000	347,913
England, India, &c. . . .	...	50,000	50,000
Total exported . . .	3,219,160	602,000	3,821,160
On hand in the colony .	709,766	360,000	1,069,766
Total quantity produced . .	3,928,926	962,000	4,890,926
Proportion of gold produced in 1851	145,146	200,000	345,146
Ditto in 1852	3,783,780	762,000	4,545,780

From this estimate therefore, which is probably not materially incorrect in any one particular, and where errors

may have a compensating operation, we have a quantity of gold amounting to nearly five millions of ounces, the whole of which, excepting some fractional proportion, has been raised from the soil of this colony within the period of sixteen months. This quantity, namely, in exact figures, 4,890,926 ounces, gives us, by troy weight, 407,577 pounds, or 203¾ tons weight of gold.

Of this proportion, I have estimated that only about the one-fourteenth part was raised during the year 1851, leaving 4,548,780 ounces as the produce of 1852. If we value this latter produce at the rate of 75s. per ounce, a rate which is to-day lower than the current market price, the result in round numbers is the amount of seventeen millions sterling, as the value of one year's produce of the gold of this colony.

From some late statistical information with regard to California, a country we are now accustomed to regard as the overshadowing gold-field of the world, I perceive that the official export of gold is stated at five millions of dollars, or about one million sterling per month, and that according to an estimate of the local press, there may be an additional unrecorded quantity amounting to one-fourth more; making *in toto* for one year a produce of gold to California of the value of fifteen millions sterling. The gold produce of California is probably still increasing, as well as that of Victoria; but, considering the initiatory circumstances of the gold-fields of this colony, it seems not unreasonable to estimate that the produce of Victoria for the current year, without reference to the gold raised in the adjacent colonies, will at least equal and perhaps somewhat exceed that of California.

To continue a comparison of such interest and importance, let us now add to the value of the gold, that of the remain-

ing articles of the export produce of the colony for the past year, amounting to one and a half million sterling. The total value is thus estimated to be eighteen and a half millions sterling, an amount very considerably exceeding that of the export produce of any other British colony, not excepting even the greatest of the magnificent Presidencies of India, and amounting to one-fourth of the annual value of the whole export produce of the Parent State.*

Population.—From a list furnished to me by Mr Khull, it would appear that the excess of arrivals over departures for the past year has averaged rather more than fifteen hundred persons weekly, 104,683 having arrived, and 27,022 having left the colony, leaving a net increase of 77,661.

The following tabular view exhibits the monthly progress of this immigration and emigration. The great increase observable in September, arises from the tide of emigration from Britain, that commenced to flow into Victoria during that month, and which has ever since continued. The accessions to the population previously were chiefly from the adjoining colonies.

Month.	Arrived.	Departed.
January	7494	550
February	7460	847
March	5073	1239
April	4111	1511
May	5631	1629
June	3872	1614
July	4271	2383
August	6552	1618
September	15,855	1841
October	19,162	3637
November	10,947	4287
December	14,255	5866

* The reader will observe that the large quantity here given is that *produced*. The quantity *exported* for 1852 was about a million ounces less.

The census of March 1851 gave the population of Victoria as over 77,000. To the recorded number of arrivals must be added a large proportion of unrecorded, who arrived in the overcrowded vessels from adjacent colonies. Some overland immigration also took place, chiefly from South Australia, to the gold-fields. Adding the increase by excess of births over deaths, the estimate of 200,000 colonists, as at 31st December last, may be deemed to be within the actual number. The following is an estimate of the distribution of this population:—

Melbourne and suburbs	70,000
Geelong and suburbs	20,000
Other towns and villages	12,000
Other settled population (pastoral and agricultural)	25,000
On the mines	73,000
Total	200,000

REFLECTIONS.

With all these elements of material progress and prosperity, the colony is not without its drawbacks. Prosperity itself, the tumultuous inroad of wealth, has unsettled the accustomed relations of society. In a still greater degree has this proved the result, from the mode of acquiring this new wealth. Without the usual necessity for capital, for skill and training, for the general guidance of mind and education, immense property has been acquired by mere rude labour and powers of physical endurance, and by parties for the most part unused to such wealth, and unprepared, in many instances, to avail themselves of its benefits. Large numbers of the operative classes have been tempted by the repute of the gold-fields to abandon their customary vocations; and the want of artisan labour is everywhere experienced in the attempts to conduct the general improve-

ment of the country, and to construct additional homes for the inpouring torrent of population.

Some of these evils are of a permanent character, but most, it may be hoped, are only temporary,—so far, at least, as regards the more prominent of the impediments to general business, and the discomforts of social life. Much, in regard to the future, must depend upon the continuance, in their present productive form, of the gold-fields of this colony.

All experience seems to confirm the general opinion already formed as to the vast extent of these auriferous deposits. With such accumulations of wealth, easily attainable by all classes; with the abuse of means likely to ensue; with the concurrent temptations to idleness and dissipation, dishonesty, and outrage; and, to crown all, with the fact before us, that thousands of the worst criminals of the empire are still annually let loose upon this gold-producing colony by the persistence in a system now utterly vicious and destructive; it is no longer possible to expect in a community so situated, such an orderly and exemplary society as might have been expected under more usual circumstances.

But, on the other hand, the colony will enjoy many special advantages from the position she is likely ere long to assume, as one of the great centres of the commerce of the world. Her greatly enlarged powers of purchasing the choicest produce of other countries will go far to compensate her society for the disorganized state of her own labour-market. Already in this respect the commerce with the United States of America, which the gold-fields have recently brought to our shores, begins to be eminently bene-

ficial in supplying the colony with articles of food, and with innumerable conveniences in general business and domestic life. One of the chief complaints at the present moment, and the occasion of much remediable discomfort, is the inadequate importation of timber, and of most other imported requisites for building purposes;—complaints, however, which, it may be confidently predicted, cannot continue for any length of time.

To the ample means of this colony, the markets of the world are open for the purchase of every aid from without that may be made available to develop colonial resources, promote the efficiency of colonial enterprise, and tend to the amelioration of life, and the progress of our society.

The comparative facilities held out by the circumstances of this colony to the rising generation of the mother country, must prove a cause of permanent attraction to many thousands of our countrymen, whose annual emigration to the southern hemisphere will tend, by the constantly sustained identity of national character, and freshness of national feeling, to retain by the strongest of bonds the connexion of our great nation with the most prosperous and progressive of her colonial dependencies.

THE END.

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